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A NOTE FROM READER STAFF

WE WANT TO begin by thanking editor in chief Anne Elizabeth Moore for deftly navigating us through these first few months of being an independent entity again. We couldn't have gotten here without her, and we wish her well.

Managing editors Sujay Kumar and Karen Hawkins are co-piloting for now, and we all

look forward to continuing to prove that independent local journalism can and will survive.

Thank you to everyone for showing so much love for last week's first-ever Plants Issue. It was a gamble, and now we know: Chicagoans are, indeed, *really* into plants. This week we explore how Metra is distant from the move-

ment of progressive transit-oriented millennials, profile the Chicago band Facs, and review the newest film and theater in town.

By the time you read this, it will be spring in Chicago, bringing with it the promise of rebirth, renewal, and new beginnings. We're here for all of it and wherever this next phase of independence takes us. —**READER STAFF**

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TRANSPORTATION

Changing lanes

Where do Lori and Toni part ways on transportation issues?

By JOHN GREENFIELD

At first blush, it may seem like mayoral hopefuls Toni Preckwinkle and Lori Lightfoot have nearly identical transportation platforms. After all, both Preckwinkle and Lightfoot said they're on board with multiple policy ideas floated by the Active Transportation Alliance in its candidate questionnaire. These include reduced transit fares for low-income Chicagoans; adding 50 miles of bus lanes; installing 100 miles of bikeways; building a continuous Chicago River trail; developing a transportation and infrastructure equity plan; implementing ride-sharing policies that encourage multipassenger trips; upgrading the Metra Electric line; and "prioritizing safety, equity, public health, and the environment above [motor vehicle] travel times when designing city streets."

But the two candidates do sometimes have different points of view when it comes to transportation. For example, during a March 7 NBC/Telemundo debate, host Carol Marin asked them if they ride bikes. "I do," said Lightfoot. Asked if she wears a helmet and obeys traffic laws, she replied "Of course."

Preckwinkle said she doesn't bike. "I walk," she said. "I walk our dog." When Marin asked if she'd support a crackdown on cycling infractions, Preckwinkle didn't say yes or no, but provided a windshield perspective on the issue. "Well . . . many of our bike riders don't pay any attention to the traffic laws, which is not only infuriating, but also scary for drivers."

That's not to say that Preckwinkle is hopelessly car-centric. Her responses to the Active Trans survey suggest that her transportation policies are generally progressive. But some of her positions are a little more driver-friendly, and, therefore, less walking-, biking-, and transit-friendly than Lightfoot's. I recently checked in with both campaigns to ask about these differences and a few other transportation issues.

Funding for bike/ped projects

Active Trans asked the candidates if they would commit to earmarking \$20 million a year in the city budget for walking and cycling infrastructure like curb extensions, pedestrian islands, pedestrian countdown signals, and bike lanes. Lightfoot said yes, which was no surprise because that idea is one of the planks in the transportation platform on her website. (Preckwinkle hasn't published a similar platform, although she did oversee the creation of Cook County's first long-range transportation plan in 75 years.) "Lori is committed to building a [transportation] system that is equitable, efficient, and safe," said her press secretary Christian Slater via e-mail. "That's why she will invest in walking and biking infrastructure."

Preckwinkle marked "No" on the questionnaire, adding that she is "hesitant to predetermine dollar amounts in budgets," but said she may wind up spending more than \$20 million a year on bike/ped projects. Reached on the phone, she cited the Cook County plan as proof that, as mayor, she wouldn't give pedestrians and cyclists the short end of the stick. "We put together a multimodal approach that includes transit, freight, walking, and biking."

Dedicated transit lanes on Lake Shore Drive

Lightfoot endorsed Active Trans' proposal to convert two of the eight lanes on the drive to transit-only corridors as part of the upcoming reconstruction of its northern portion, although she wrote that "the devil's in the details" and she'd want to see the results of a traffic study before changes are made.

Preckwinkle wasn't down with the proposal, writing that she'd seen studies that found that creating speedy transit on the drive via car-free lanes wouldn't draw much new ridership due to the proximity of the Red Line. "Given the congestion on Lake Shore Drive, it makes sense to use multipurpose lanes with transit and tolled [vehicles] together," she told me. Active Trans and a coalition of nine other civic and community groups have dis-



puted the models that predicted fast transit wouldn't draw heavy ridership, and the groups argued that multipurpose lanes would become clogged with cars.

Camera enforcement of bus lanes

Lightfoot's platform notes that Chicago's Loop Link express system has seen only modest speed gains, partly because motorists who drive in the bus-only lanes are rarely ticketed. I asked if she'd support automated enforcement of the lanes, as is currently done in New York. "Lori will work with the state legislature to permit fair camera enforcement of bus lanes," Slater said.

Both candidates have blasted Chicago's motorist ticketing system, which has been shown to trap many low-income residents in a vicious cycle of debt, and called for ending drivers' license suspensions for nonmoving violations. Preckwinkle said she's also opposed to bus lane cameras. "If you go to Traffic Court, it's a parade of black and brown people . . . so I'm hesitant, frankly, to commit to more cameras."

Reduced fares for low-income people

Again, both candidates said "Yes" to Active Trans' proposal for a 50 percent discount on CTA, Metra, and Pace fares for residents at or below the federal poverty line, similar to the Seattle area's reduced-fare program. "I support making transit affordable for those who are least able to afford it and most likely to depend on transit to travel to work, school, conduct errands, or receive medical services," Lightfoot wrote.

However, Preckwinkle has made a few contradictory statements at candidate forums about who would qualify. When asked to clarify, she noted that when then-governor Rod Blagojevich made fares free for seniors,

regardless of income, it put a major dent in the CTA budget. "I would focus on young people," she said. "Many students go to schools outside their neighborhoods."

A few more things

Both campaigns confirmed that they're opposed to Elon Musk's O'Hare Express scheme. Slater called it "Musk's fiction of a tunnel." Preckwinkle said she thinks the project is unlikely to pass City Council before the next mayor takes office and indicated that she would kill it. "If we're looking for an express to O'Hare, there are considerably less expensive options using existing rail lines."

Lightfoot and Preckwinkle are both against Rahm Emanuel's proposal to raise the state gas tax to fund infrastructure. Slater called it "regressive." Preckwinkle said Illinois governor J.B. Pritzker's graduated state income tax proposal would be an "equitable way to raise funds for transportation."

And both campaigns said they would end the Chicago Police Department's admitted practice of using stops for minor bicycle violations as a pretext to conduct searches in high-crime communities of color. Preckwinkle compared that strategy to the CPD's inequitable marijuana enforcement tactics.

The bottom line

While some of Preckwinkle's positions are more conservative than Lightfoot's, they both generally have sensible transportation platforms, so that probably shouldn't tip the scales for anyone who's not a single-issue voter. The good news is that, no matter who wins on April 2, we're not going to have a motorhead as mayor.

@greenfieldjohn

CITY LIFE



ISA GIALLORENZO

STREET VIEW

Rhyme scheme

A poet uses fashion like an open mike.

“I ALWAYS THINK of this coat and vest combination as being almost ‘ninja’ in feeling,” says Jenene Raveslout, who was photographed while shopping at the Target store on Peterson Avenue in West Ridge. The 76-year-old poet was eager to show the intricate embroidery of her Danny Mansmith pieces—certainly not the only fun items in her wardrobe. “I do think it is important to dress with flair and a sense of humor,” she says. Raveslout often pairs unique accessories like mink and pearl earrings with

Levi’s and loves wearing suspenders as well as dresses. Her hair changes often; one day a mohawk, the next a bowl or pixie cut. As for her verse choices, Raveslout is especially interested in form poetry—sestinas, sonnets, villanelles, and pantoums—and writes about everything from nature to noir. She co-hosts a poetry night with her husband, poet Tom Roby IV, on the first and third Friday every month at the Outdoor Cafe (3257 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.).

—ISA GIALLORENZO

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Rahm Emanuel announcing his candidacy for mayor in 2010 DANIEL X. O'NEIL

POLITICS

Rahm's rewrite

Emanuel tells some tall tales about TIFs and CPS to repair his reputation as Mayor 1 Percent.

By **BEN JORAVSKY**

If all had gone well, we'd be heading into the last days of Karen Lewis's first term as mayor and, fingers crossed, the start of her second.

Alas, all did not go well. In 2014, Lewis—former president of the Chicago Teachers Union—got sick with cancer and had to drop her race against Rahm.

Lewis all but begged Toni Preckwinkle to run. But Toni wouldn't take the challenge.

So, Lewis and the CTU wound up backing Jesus "Chuy" Garcia. He forced Rahm to a runoff, but the mayor won. And so here we are.

I've got a bad case of the might-have-beens as I watch Rahm continue to throw cash at the well-to-do (think Lincoln Yards) while trying to eradicate his reputation as Mayor 1 Percent who, you know, throws cash at the well-to-do.

It's a juggling act that requires tall tales and history rewrites—as with Mayor Rahm's misleading comments regarding the Lincoln Yards deal and his recent essay in *The Atlantic* about his ever-shifting philosophy toward public education.

Let's start with his Lincoln Yards comments.

They came on March 13 after the City Council had approved the zoning change for the massive Lincoln Yards project in which the overburdened Chicago taxpayers are being asked to spend \$1.3 billion to underwrite an upscale development in an already gentrifying north side community.

Even though we have hundreds of millions of very pressing obligations regarding pensions and bridge and road repairs, as well as pending police, fire, and teacher contracts to negotiate.

The final vote on Lincoln Yards will come in the lame duck session in April. I'm hoping that whoever wins the runoff—Preckwinkle or Lori Lightfoot—shows up in person to urge aldermen to defer action.

At the very least, it would be interesting to see which mayor the aldermen will abide—the one heading out the door or the one coming in.

Anyway, about Rahm's comments. "He sounded a bit like former Mayor Richard M. Daley haranguing aldermen from the dais as he challenged naysayers to come up with a better idea than developments like Lincoln

Yards to raise money to deal with Chicago's pressing financial problems," the *Tribune's* John Byrne wrote.

"You use the ability to grow in the city . . . Otherwise, you can just either cut police, fire, garbage services, or you can just tax folks." Wow—that's a whopper, even for Rahm.

Just so you know, Lincoln Yards will not contribute new property taxes to help deal with our "pressing financial problems" for at least 23 years.

In fact, it's just the opposite—it will *divert* property taxes from our pressing financial needs.

That's because it's in a TIF district. And in a Tax Increment Financing district, new property taxes go to the TIF fund—not the schools, parks, county, and so forth—for the 23-year-life of the TIF district.

That means the property taxes paid for by people who own property in Lincoln Yards will be essentially turned over to the developer, Sterling Bay, to cover the costs of building its project—including fees for publicists, lawyers, and bankers.

To compensate for the property taxes they're not getting from Lincoln Yards, the schools, parks, county, and city will have to raise property taxes. One more time, people—Lincoln Yards will raise, not lower, your property taxes. That's how TIF deals work.

I don't know why Rahm would tell such an obvious falsehood, but he did.

As to his essay in *The Atlantic*—it's part of his attempt to justify the teachers' strike of 2012. He says it was largely about empowering principals.

I almost burst out laughing when I read that one, especially considering the history of Barbara Byrd-Bennett, Rahm's handpicked schools CEO.

In 2017, Byrd-Bennett went to prison for four-and-one-half years for her role in funneling \$23 million to her cronies at SUPES, a consulting firm.

Just so you know, *Atlantic* readers, SUPES got that \$23 million to run training sessions for the very school principals Rahm was supposedly trying to empower.

Many principals warned us that the training sessions were a waste of time and money. But Rahm paid them no mind. That \$23 million wound up being the price we paid so Byrd-Bennett would be Rahm's public face on his school closings.

Part of Rahm's essay reads like a confession—or as the headline puts it: "I Used to Preach the Gospel of Education Reform. Then I Became the Mayor."

The so-called educational reformers were Democratic centrists who figured they could win over swing voters and raise campaign donations from the well-to-do—if they bashed teachers, attacked teachers' unions and took public money from unionized public schools and gave them to nonunion charters.

The argument was that bad teachers kept low-income students from performing as well as rich ones. Get rid of those bad teachers, the reform mantra went, and the performance gap would vanish—as though poverty had nothing to do with it. Then public officials, like Mayor Rahm, would be free to take hundreds of millions from the schools and turn them over to, you know, the Sterling Bays of the world. After all, if it's only a matter of getting rid of bad teachers, why waste our money on public education?

Apparently, Rahm has come to see the error of his ways. "It's unconscionable for anyone who underwrites their own kids' private tutors, music lessons, after-school activities, summer camps, and summer jobs to argue that children from less-advantaged backgrounds should not have the same privileges and support," he wrote.

Damn, Rahm, you're starting to sound like me.

OK, Mr. Mayor, if you really see the light, here's what you can do. Kill the Lincoln Yards TIF. Instead, take that \$1.3 billion from Sterling Bay and use it to hire the counselors, nurses, therapists, librarians, and tutors the kids in our public schools need.

You still have about two months in office to find your inner Karen Lewis.

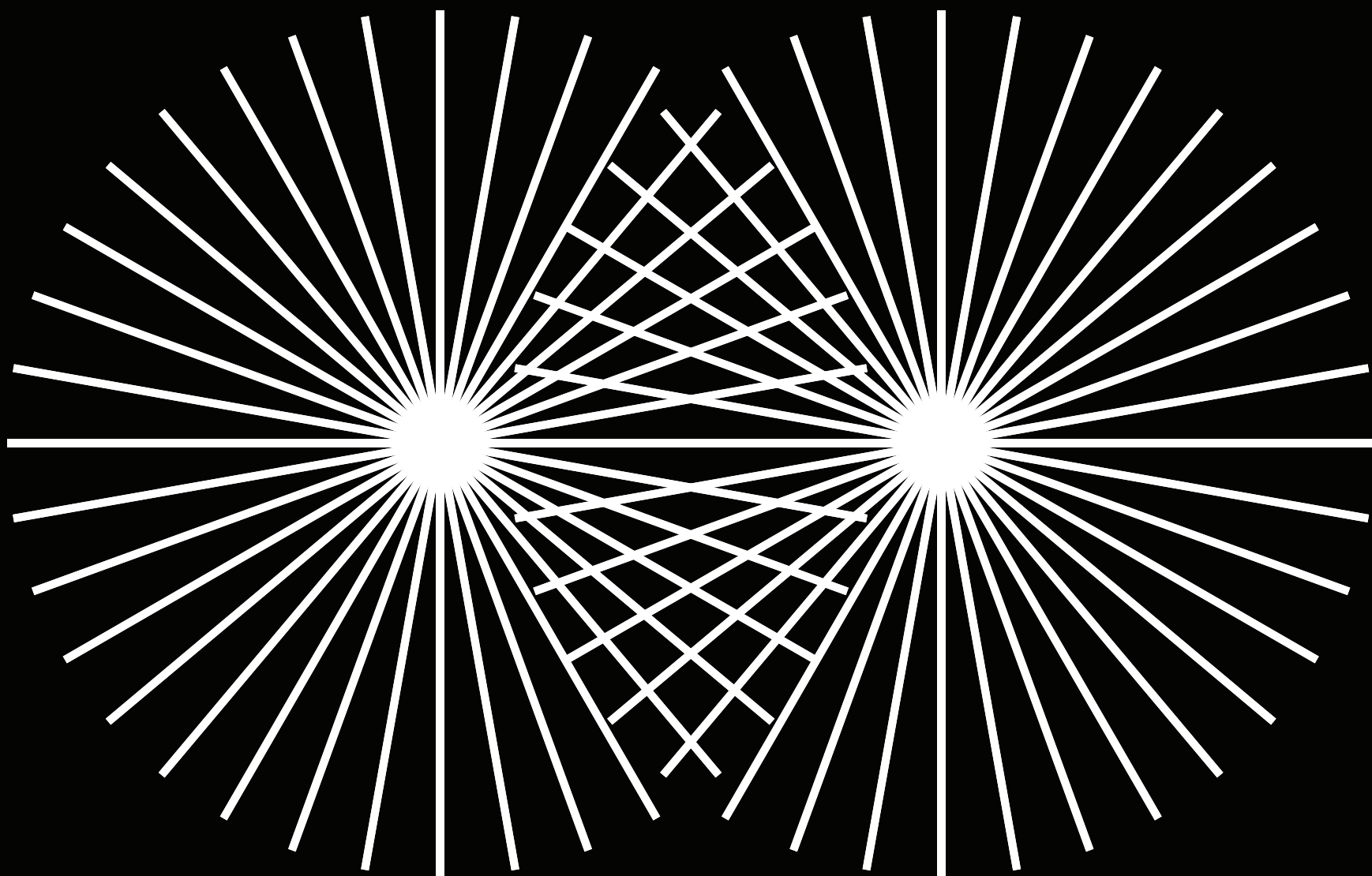
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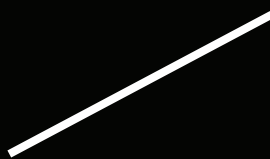
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CSO conductor Riccardo Muti joins the picket line **EDDIE ARRUZA**

ON CULTURE

The CSO hits the street

Orchestra musicians strike to retain their pensions.

By **DEANNA ISAACS**

You can always find great musicians on the streets of Chicago, but not usually members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. But now those performers are walking a picket line, striking mostly for something American workers of the last century commonly had: a dependable pension.

That would be a pension that provides an established monthly income—a set amount that continues, often with cost-of-living increases, for as long as the worker lives. Pensions like that used to be one of the key benefits at American companies and one they were proud to offer, back when it was understood that workers who gave their best years to a job deserved a secure retirement.

Then, as the 21st century approached, things changed. While the people at the top of the biggest corporations—and the corporations themselves—made more and more money, it somehow became too much of a

burden on those businesses to provide their workers with what is now known as a “defined benefit” plan. Employers began offering a different kind of retirement plan, one that would let them shed the responsibility of providing a guaranteed income for their employees’ golden years. They called it something that sounded similar, but was, in fact, very different: a “defined contribution” plan.

Under this new plan, the employer would put a certain amount of money into a retirement fund for each employee every pay period and be off the hook for anything else. The money would be invested (workers would typically get to choose from a menu of investment possibilities), but whether those investments would grow enough to provide a decent retirement income would no longer be the employer’s concern. The risk that they might not was transferred entirely to the worker.

This “defined contribution” plan is what most private-sector employees have now, if

they’re lucky enough to have any employer-funded retirement benefits. If you have a 401(k) at work, it’s what you’ve got.

But musicians at the nation’s half-dozen top orchestras, including the CSO—musicians who excel as much in their field as, say, the prized players on Major League Baseball teams—have been able to hang on to the old arrangement, which they say is a crucial recruiting tool in a highly competitive market for new talent. Until now.

Which brings us to the picket line. In contract negotiations that have dragged on for nearly a year, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association, which manages the CSO and employs the musicians, has made it clear that it intends to dump the defined benefit pension.

Here’s how management put it in a statement issued in response to the strike, which began when the previous contract ran out at midnight on March 10: “As has occurred with most Defined Benefit Plans across the country, the financial obligations to continue this plan have become an increasing and significant financial burden for the Association. It must shift and modernize the type of retirement benefit offered going forward if it is to protect the musicians and the long-term future of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for future generations.”

So management is proposing to “protect the musicians” by shifting the “significant finan-

cial burden” of providing retirement income to them.

There are other issues at stake, including salary increases in what, until recent years, was the best-compensated orchestra in the nation. Base salary last season was \$159,000. And management has produced a graph that purports to show that, when adjusted for the local cost of living, CSO musicians are still better compensated than their peers, with the possible exception of those in Cleveland.

But the musicians, represented by the Chicago Federation of Musicians, say their pay now lags behind that in San Francisco and Los Angeles, and that, as bassist Stephen Lester put it in an interview last week, “If the trend isn’t reversed, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra will be compensated as a second-tier orchestra. And that’s unthinkable to us.”

Last year, the CSO had a \$911,000 operating deficit, and operating expenses of more than \$73.6 million, in what management characterized as a successful season, one that “represents a step forward” on the path to a financially sustainable future. Lurking somewhere in the background is a \$140 million bond debt, taken on in the 1990s to finance an arguably unnecessary and unsuccessful redevelopment of its Daniel Burnham-designed Orchestra Hall, originally built in 1904.

Still, according to the musicians’ fact sheet, “CSO has maintained a strong balance sheet, with a \$300 million endowment, \$72 million investment fund, and nearly \$300 million in net assets. It can afford to maintain the CSO as America’s leading orchestra if it chooses to do so.”

I called arts consultant Drew McManus, a Chicago-based expert in orchestra management, for his opinion on all this. He told me salaries and other benefits are likely negotiable. The pension issue, on the other hand, in a worst-case scenario, could kill this season (which runs into June) and even extend into the next. The items of contention in past contract negotiations, he said, “pale in comparison.” What about the musicians’ claim that the CSO needs to keep its defined benefit retirement plan in order to hire the best talent and maintain its status as a great orchestra? “Every other major orchestra offers a similar benefit,” he said. “They certainly need to hold on to it to remain competitive.” **■**

@Deannalisaacs

NEWS & POLITICS



Green Flex 600 by Joel Huffman
 JOEL HUFFMAN/
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NEWS

Survival of the starter home

Could a design contest help replenish Chicago's affordable housing stock?

By **LAUREN STYX**

Those iconic, boxy beauties known as Chicago bungalows were the starter homes for a generation of immigrants looking to begin a new life in the city. The brick houses were built in the early 1900s for a wood-wary Chicago still skittish of fire, and were designed to fit the city's standard lots and challenging winters. As the population boomed, bungalows were replicated tenfold because of their smart design and affordability. Where are their contemporary brethren?

As the city's housing stock ages, construction costs rise, and the luxury market reaches new heights, it's no longer advantageous for developers to build starter homes. Housing options have grown scarce for many working families and young people looking to buy their first home. Subsidized housing is helpful but can't be the only option. So, how can you attempt to solve this problem and inspire architects to stretch construction dollars and design a new generation of starter homes? Start by giving them an incentive.

The Chicago Housing Policy Task Force, a diverse group of affordable-housing organizations, created the Disruptive Design competition to address these challenges. Architects, designers, students, and urban developers were invited to submit plans for an owner-occupied, single-family home with a purchase price of \$250,000. The winning design will be developed by Related Midwest—the company who's also behind mega-development “The 78”—on three vacant, city-owned lots in Bronzeville and West Humboldt Park.

The task force is made up of representatives from Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago, LISC Chicago, The American Institute of Architects Chicago, Northern Trust, and Chicago Neighborhood Initiatives. The group often focuses on addressing areas of regulation, taxes, and economic development with city and state officials, but this competition is another slice of their efforts to tackle affordable homeownership.

“As Chicago continues to lose population, I think we have to ask ourselves why and how

is housing a part of that?” says Sarah Brune, competition organizer and manager of innovation and public policy with NHS. “We want to make sure that working families are able to stay in Chicago and really have a stable and fulfilling life here. I think that giving them affordable and quality housing options is one way to do that.”

In early February, participants submitted preliminary design drawings and a written narrative detailing how the design addresses cost, sustainability, zoning, and wealth-building components—i.e., as a live-work space or income unit. A jury of architecture experts will get feedback from Bronzeville and West Humboldt Park residents on the 130 entries received and choose three finalists who will each be given a \$10,000 stipend to develop a much more detailed design. The finalists will submit proposals, along with another ➔

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NEWS & POLITICS

continued from 9 narrative describing how the community and expert feedback was incorporated. Finally, one winning design will be chosen to be built. The architect will be given a prize of \$20,000 and will work with Related Midwest to make the design a reality.

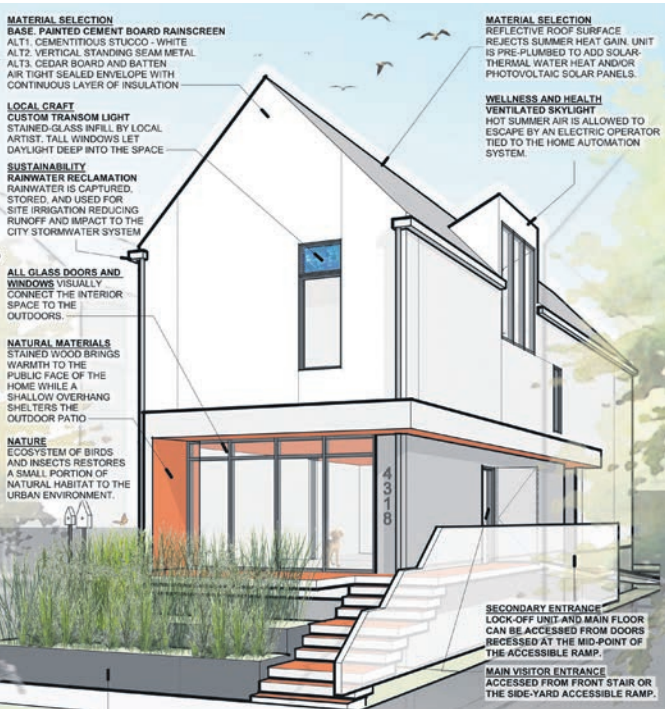
The competition will produce one winner, but the ambition is that all finalist entries could be realistic solutions for affordable homeownership and present innovations in live-work capabilities, construction materials and methods, accessibility, and opportunity for aging in place.

“Hopefully these three finalists are really robust and something we can promote not just from this competition but in the future, something that can really be adapted and taken on,” Brune says. “If we’re not putting those starter homes in the stock today, what does that mean ten years down the road?”

Chicago is a segregated city. Does centering this competition in Bronzeville and West Humboldt Park, both predominantly black and Hispanic, perpetuate this racial divide? Competition organizers said both neigh-

Right: contemporary two-story by Georgi Todorov and Petya Petrova

Far right: adaptable-house by Greg Tamborino
Georgi Todorov, Petya Petrova
Greg Tamborino



borhoods are seeing a surge of development well above the price range of many first-time buyers and working-family residents. Third Ward alderman Pat Dowell wants to ensure these residents don’t get pushed out as land

value continues to increase. Owning a home provides security and a foothold for building generational wealth.

“Equity in one’s home and to be able to purchase a home in a community where the land is valuable for an affordable price provides you with a great opportunity,” Dowell says.

Bronzeville resident Valencia Hardy says she and the organization she works with, Housing Bronzeville, have been fighting the city for years to bring more affordable housing to the neighborhood, even submitting their own designs to both Alderman Dowell and Cook County Board President and mayoral candidate Toni Preckwinkle—and receiving no response. Hardy was surprised to hear about the contest, but doesn’t think it will hurt the neighborhood. Her main concern is the \$250,000 price point that she considers too high for working families in Bronzeville.

“This is a black historical area,” Hardy says. “It’s not the point that we don’t want to share. We just don’t want to be priced out.”

With a higher concentration of vacant, city-owned lots, south- and west-side neighborhoods provided more opportunity. Brune hopes an affordable, accessible, and replicable design produced by this competition will help bridge the gap left from decades of disinvestment in these communities, and make affordable development more of a reality for neighborhoods throughout the city and Chicagoans in the future.

Rarely do the winning plans in affordable housing design contests come to fruition or focus on single-family homes. AIA has strong ties to the architecture community and experi-

ence with affordable housing in Chicago—their recent tiny homes design competition tackled the issue of homelessness in the LGBTQ community. Anjolie Rao, communications director of AIA (who has written for the Reader), hopes competitors will provide new perspectives on how the city can improve policy.

“We’re asking architects to look at Chicago’s existing building code and global case studies where affordable housing is effective,” Rao says. “What changes need to happen to Chicago’s building code to make these projects feasible, more dynamic and more effective in housing people, building income and building a new type of wealth?”

Related Midwest has already met opposition in Bronzeville as Alderman Dowell pushed back on proposed TIF district boundaries for The 78, which borders the Third Ward and is set to divert \$1.1 billion in property tax proceeds. In the case of the design contest, the developer claims the focus is the desires of the community. “[Resident committee] input is going to be critically important to this, because at the end of the day it’s the residents’ community,” says Don Biernacki, Related Midwest senior vice president of construction. “For too long some communities have felt alienated from the process.”

Come spring, Chicago might be looking at a modern version of affordable housing that focuses not so much on accommodating the city’s newcomers, as the bungalow did, but taking care of those who are already here and deserve to stay. [A]

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“New Urbanist Memes for Transit-Oriented Teens,” known as NUMTOT, the 139,000-member

Facebook group of people whom *The Guardian* has called “millennials who find fixing public transport sexy,” was launched here in Illinois by University of Chicago students. About 4,900 of the group’s members say on their Facebook profiles they live in Chicago, the second-most of any city. (New York is first.)

NUMTOT members—part of a growing movement of young people across the world invested in improving life in cities, with a special focus on equitable and climate-friendly transit—joke regularly about banning cars. For example, a picture of an automobile covered in menacing-looking icicles was shared with the caption “Is this the final boss in the fight to ban cars?” They also post pictures of cute dogs boarding buses and trains and argue in the comments about the best transit policy. (Would congestion pricing in New York City work well to fund the MTA, or would it just punish poor people?) When one member recently posted a screenshot of a tweet from Metra, Chicago’s commuter rail system, about its urgent need for sustainable funding, the post received 1,800 reactions and 130 comments.

Yet Metra seems distant from the movement of progressive transit-oriented millennials. The 11-member Metra board, which convenes in a nondescript boardroom on the 13th floor of the agency’s stately West Loop building, skews older and is not diverse: it includes one black man, one black woman, and nine white men. At three Metra meet- ➔

SOPHIA PAPPAS

Warning bells

With a Democrat in the governor’s office, Metra expects to finally get an influx of cash—but will it be enough to make up for the years-long backlog?

By MARI COHEN

continued from 11

ings in late 2018, for example, I appeared to be the only millennial in the room.

Millennials' fondness for public transit is rarely discussed. At the November meeting, the topic of millennials came up only because board member John Plante, appointed to represent Cook County's northern suburbs, pointed to a report suggesting that though millennials tend to settle down later, they will eventually move to the suburbs once they get married and have children, which he said would make them candidates for Metra's service. Such comments have made it clear that the board sees Metra's passenger base as suburban residents commuting into the city for work, even though several Metra lines have stops within the city but outside of downtown. In the same board meeting, one member argued that Metra is important because attracting corporations to downtown Chicago could economically revitalize Illinois, and people working at those corporations will want to live in the suburbs. "Metra's the future," Ken Koehler, who represents McHenry County, said emphatically. "It's not CTA."

Metra's board and staff warn that service is jeopardized by the fact that the commuter rail agency is billions short on the capital funding needed to repair and replace its aging infrastructure. With a new governor in office, a bill to provide state funding for Metra and other infrastructure projects seems more likely than it has in years. But Metra faces the daunting task of convincing legislators to fund it even as infrastructure projects compete for attention. Metra hopes to rally its riders to make the case to state government, but some riders are already skeptical that Metra needs any more money after several years of fare increases. And it must make the case for sustained investment in a commuter rail system as international cities increasingly turn to the more expansive, urbanist-preferred "regional rail" model, serving a base beyond typical suburban commuters.

"We are a big component of the success of this region and that's what we have to sell," said Metra CEO Jim Derwinski at a board meeting in November. "This is gonna be hard work and it's gonna be big stuff."

It's not just the region's success at stake: in a planet increasingly jeopardized by climate change, it's crucial for the state to turn away from car-centric infrastructure and invest in transportation options that limit emissions. Yet Metra rarely mentions climate change in its pleas for capital funding. As it stands, though it needs all the help it can get, the suburban-focused Metra board is out of touch

with the transit-championing, Green-New-Deal-supporting young people who would be likely to rally around supporting public transit.

It has been nine long years since the state of Illinois gave Metra any capital funding, which can be used to repair, replace, and build infrastructure like trains and tracks (as opposed to operations funding, which is used for the system's day-to-day—paying staff, handling ticket sales, and much more). Metra currently subsists on an approximately \$200 million yearly capital budget of mostly federal funds, which is far below what it needs to replace the aging stock and crumbling bridges inherited when the agency took over commuter rail service from private railroads in 1980. Forty percent of Metra's assets are now in "marginal or worn" condition, according to its 2018 "State of the System" report. Metra has little to spend on regular infrastructure maintenance, making fixes more expensive in the long run.

"I think there are different people out there that believe that the fares themselves cover everything to operate this system and that's so incorrect," Derwinski told me in an interview. "They cover 50 percent of the operations costs and [that] doesn't even take into consideration any of the capital replacement costs, let alone the cost to replace the oldest stuff and make the system much more modern and efficient." (In fact, there is no public transit system in the U.S. that pays for itself through fares.) Metra has raised fares six times since 2011. In 2018, the Metra board decided against hiking ticket prices, concluding that the additional costs would only hurt riders without providing enough to substantially improve the capital situation.

Meanwhile, despite its aged assets, the system continues to run 709 trains a day, fetching commuters from the corners of the Chicagoland region and ferrying them to and from the Loop and West Loop, serving an average of nearly 290,000 passengers each weekday, making it the country's most-used commuter rail system after the three systems serving the New York City area. The next-biggest commuter rail agency, SEPTA, which services a five-county area that includes Philadelphia, sees about only half as many daily passengers. (Metra is much smaller than its city counterpart—by comparison, CTA trains saw an average of 740,000 daily passengers last year.)

The capital backlog is beginning to catch up with service. For example, on December 3, an engine fire on a train on the Milwaukee District line forced passengers to evacuate. That same

"When we move 1,700 people in a train, you could put our dirtiest locomotive on there and we still blow away the emissions that would have been produced by 1,700 different cars trying to idle their way downtown."

—Jim Derwinski, Metra CEO

day, engine problems on a Heritage Corridor train stranded passengers for nearly three hours. Metra Board of Directors chair Norman Carlson later said these events showed Metra equipment is reaching a "point of inflection."

With Republican Bruce Rauner in the governor's seat, there was little movement toward a new capital bill for Illinois infrastructure. The former governor announced his support for a capital bill at times during his tenure, but did not want to raise taxes to fund it. Instead, he wanted to pay for the bill by reducing taxes and regulations on corporations, which he claimed would induce more businesses to come to Illinois, increasing the tax base. But that bill would likely have been opposed by a Democrat-controlled legislature, and Rauner never backed up his vocal support with concrete proposals.

But new Democratic governor J.B. Pritzker has expressed support for such a bill, and since 25 percent of the current General Assembly legislators are newly elected, Metra sees an opportunity to advocate for its needs. "Governor Pritzker believes infrastructure needs in Illinois have been neglected for too long and looks forward to working with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to pass a comprehensive capital plan that will bring Illinois' infrastructure into the 21st century," said Jordan Abudayyeh, a spokeswoman for Pritzker, in an e-mail to the *Reader*. (Abudayyeh did not address specific questions about whether that bill would definitely include money for Metra.)

With that in mind, Metra CEO Jim Derwinski has put together a plan to ask for \$5 billion from the state for the next five to seven years. Even this is short of the \$6.1 billion that would put Metra in a "state of good repair" (meaning it has no backlog of needed repair projects) and the over \$11 billion that the Regional Transportation Authority estimates Metra needs for maintenance. At board meetings at the end of last year, Derwinski had suggested that money could go toward buying new locomotives and train cars, repairing more bridges, improving stations, adding more express trains, and more.

One recent setback is that the Restoring Illinois Infrastructure Committee, convened in late November by Pritzker's transition team, included the president of the CTA and the board chair of Amtrak—but not Derwinski or any of the 11 members of Metra's Board of Directors, who are appointed by the elected leaders of Chicago, suburban Cook County, and the collar counties.

In order to bolster its chances with the legislators, Metra is pleading its case to riders and encouraging them to contact state repre-

sentatives. In addition to holding meetings across the region, Metra plans to pass out information about the budget crisis on trains and continue to spread the word via social media, radio, and television.

“People definitely need to feel empowered to talk about transportation,” said Audrey Wennink, who directs transportation efforts for the Metropolitan Planning Council, an organization that researches and advocates solutions for an “equitable, sustainable, and prosperous Chicago region.” “Legislators say they don’t hear as much about transportation as they do about other issues. This is the time for them to hear from businesses, from riders of the system, about how much transportation affects their lives.”

Beyond advocating for state funding, an additional option for Metra to explore is issuing bonds. Though the Regional Transportation Authority provides some money from bonds issued on Metra’s behalf, Metra also has the legal authority to issue up to \$1 billion in its own bonds—which could make a sizable dent in the backlog. The agency has never taken advantage of this, and prides itself on not relying on borrowing money. In the introduction to its 2019 budget, Metra wrote, “We are also good stewards of the public dollar. We do not overspend, and we have not mortgaged our future by borrowing money we cannot repay.” (The CTA has been issuing bonds since 2003 for buying and renovating infrastructure and currently has about \$5 million in debt.)

Critics, though, argue Metra could make more use of its authority to borrow money. While it’s true that Metra would have to budget for paying off bonds, the funds from borrowing would ideally improve the equipment and go towards regular maintenance, reducing the likelihood of costly emergency repairs and ultimately saving money.

Metra’s strategy is like “insisting that you’re going to buy a house in cash, but not take out a mortgage, but your income is not remotely close enough to ever buy a house in cash,” said Daniel Kay Hertz, research director for Chicago’s Center for Tax and Budget Accountability. “It’s a normal part of buying a house to take out a mortgage. It’s a normal part of doing massive infrastructure things to take out a reasonable amount of bonds.”

While bonds could help Metra with its infrastructure needs, borrowing money would supplement but not replace needed sustainable state funding. The question remains, of course, as to how perpetually cash-strapped Illinois will pay for capital funding for Metra and other needed infrastructure projects. Pritzker has previously suggested legalizing

and taxing marijuana or expanding gaming taxes as options. Rahm Emanuel has pushed for a 20 to 30 cents per gallon increase in the state’s gas tax, which has not been raised in three decades, and 26 suburban mayors have signed on in agreement. But the proposal is controversial, as tax hikes nearly always are—including among some Metra board members who are also mayors of local suburbs.

“In the scheme of things, a fuel tax is far less controversial [than other revenue options] . . . most other states have raised their fuel taxes,” said Wennink. “Given that we have not raised it in 30 years and it’s not indexed to inflation, it’s a very logical choice. It’s also logical because it’s a user fee. People who are using the transportation system are paying to use it.” Taxing fuel to pay for public transit and other infrastructure improvements is also a way to encourage people to move toward greener forms of transportation, including walking, biking, and public transit. “The transportation sector contributes more than a quarter of greenhouse gases. It’s a very significant contributor, and so there’s a great opportunity for making an impact through transportation,” Wennink said.

Derwinski said a well-functioning Metra makes a big impact on reducing emissions. “The fact of the matter is, you know, when we move 1,700 people in a train, you could put our dirtiest locomotive on there and we still blow away the emissions that would have been produced by 1,700 different cars trying to idle their way downtown, trying to get into that traffic jam, that congestion,” Derwinski said. Electrifying the whole system would be the cleanest option, but it’s costly.

On a cold November morning at the Metra stop in south suburban Harvey, I watched passengers assemble for the weekday commute. In the 20-minute intervals between trains, riders gathered in the lightly heated shelters on either end of the platform, which emptied out each time bells announced an incoming train. Repeat.

At this station, across from a Pace bus terminal, around 500 people board trains each day, according to Metra’s most recent ridership counts; nearby at 147th St/Sibley Blvd, there are nearly 1,000 riders. This makes that station among the most-used on the Metra Electric, Metra’s only electric-powered line, which travels through the south side and south suburbs. (The line’s most popular station is Hyde Park’s 55th-56th Street, which sees 1,500 daily boardings.)

One rider waiting on the stairs was William Whittaker, a longtime Harvey ➔

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resident who takes the train every day to get to his marketing job downtown. “I couldn’t be happier,” he said. “I took a new job down there. I didn’t want to work downtown again but since it was right off the Metra stop I said I’d take the job.”

In the mid-platform shelter, Kamiyah McDory, who just moved to Harvey a few months earlier, was waiting for a northbound train for a job at a Subway sandwich shop in Hyde Park. She wishes Metra service was cheaper (a ticket from Harvey to Hyde Park costs \$5.50 each way; a monthly unlimited pass is \$159.50), but otherwise is glad to be able to get to her job quickly. “[Without Metra] I would have to take the regular trains and regular buses,” she said. “It’s too far, and then I would have to probably look for another job, since I’m not driving at the moment.”

Meanwhile, home care aide Omar Qahhaar was waiting for one of the rarer southbound trains to pull up on the other side of the platform. He needed Metra to get to Richton Park, but he was frustrated that morning southbound trains from Harvey are so infrequent and, he said, often late. “I hit [Metra] up all the time. I complain,” he said, and Metra responded that “they have to prioritize what’s more important, basically, to them.” (Metra, in its reports, says Metra Electric trains were on time 97.7 percent of the time in 2018.)

Reverse-commute passengers face long waits because Metra is primarily designed to bring suburban commuters downtown in the morning and take them home in the evening, rather than to serve people traveling in the

opposite direction and at off-peak times. But Metra’s service doesn’t necessarily have to be so narrow, according to Yonah Freemark, a PhD candidate in urban planning at MIT who formerly worked for Chicago’s Metropolitan Planning Council. The concept of “commuter rail”—a service designed specifically for relatively higher income people commuting to 9 to 5 jobs—is mostly unique to the United States. Peer rail systems in other countries operate as “regional rail” systems that run all day in multiple directions—helpful for riders like Qahhaar who need to travel to jobs in the opposite direction of a region’s central business district. Freemark thinks that Metra should consider this model, especially given the diverse region it serves.

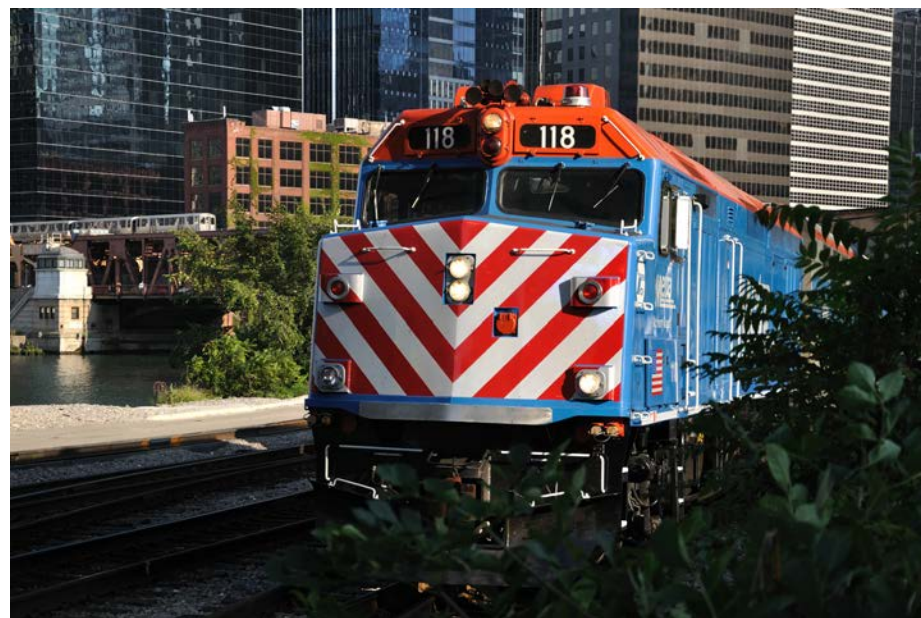
“If your entire philosophy . . . is designed around upper-middle-class people commuting downtown, but the neighborhood you’re serving is filled with people who have other needs, then you have to question whether you’re doing the right thing as a transportation provider,” Freemark said.

While transforming the service might seem far-fetched for cash-strapped Metra, Freemark said that more innovation and expanded service could ultimately help Metra gain more riders and be a more attractive candidate for sustained funding. But such a strategy would likely require investment and vision from state or county politicians, he said. “Metra could be a leader in changing the way we think about transit service.”

I asked Derwinski about the regional rail model supported by Freemark and other urbanists. He said, “We’ve looked at that,” but noted that it “comes down to cost.” Metra did recently agree to a public-private partnership with economic development corporation Lake County Partners to run reverse-commute service from downtown to Lake Forest. But Derwinski said that Metra’s ability to expand service is complicated by the fact that Metra only owns four of the lines where its trains run; the rest are owned by other railroads.

“And so for us to say we just want to double the trains, that’s probably going to be a huge negotiation, would probably be a lot more infrastructure put into place so that they would be able to preserve their freight business,” he said. The Metra Electric might be a place to experiment because it doesn’t cross any other freight railroads; however, he said, “there has to be some study in the front of that that says people have a need to go back and forth, back and forth.”

Activists on the south side have campaigned for increased service, akin to rapid transit, on the Metra Electric for years, since the line



ERIC PANCER

travels through many far south side communities without easy access to the service. Riders of the Metra Electric look different than most of Metra’s other customers, according to Metra’s own ridership studies: They are lower income, more African-American, more female, and more likely to be renters.

The Coalition for a Modern Metra Electric, which advocates for rapid service on the line and fare integration with CTA and Pace, stepped up to the mic for public comment at the December board meeting. Group representative Linda Thisted said “now is the time” to advocate for changes. The Coalition asked Metra to release more funding details about how much a conversion to rapid transit would cost—they have previously been told \$750 million.

But the Metra Electric has seen a steady decrease in ridership in the last decade. Metra even did a marketing study to better understand why Metra Electric riders have left the system. They found that 48 percent of 150 former riders they surveyed had moved or changed jobs. The low ridership numbers make Metra officials wary of increasing service.

Derwinski is skeptical that bringing more frequent service would significantly boost Metra Electric ridership at the current price point.

“If you cost more and more and more to operate and you want it to cost less and less and less to have a fare on that, that equation is the part that we struggle with right now,” he said.

A cost-benefit analysis of major capital proj-

ects that Metra completed in January estimated that the “Modern Metra Electric” project would cost \$900 million in capital costs and that the modern line would recoup only 13 percent of its operating costs with fares each year—though this is based on Metra’s own estimates for how many people would use the modern service. (For comparison, the CTA is planning an extension of the Red Line to 130th Street that would cost \$2.3 billion—though it has had trouble securing the needed funding from the current federal administration.)

Metra seems caught in a catch-22: providing innovative new service across the system could bring back more riders and generate excitement, which would help make the case for more funding. But it’s hard to get to that point without securing significant funding in the first place.

“If you see decreasing ridership, your first instinct isn’t always to add more trains,” said Wennink of the Metropolitan Planning Council. “This is the challenge we have in our region to continue to increase collaboration and creativity in terms of solving some of these problems. If we want climate change interventions, if we want more equitable transportation, we want a healthy population, we want increased traffic safety, all of these problems can be addressed by transportation. We need to commit to this. We need the political will.” ■

This article was produced in collaboration with City Bureau (citybureau.org).

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READING THE COMMENTS

by Madeline Hester

Confession: I love reading online comments. I know one of the first things you learn about the internet is not to read the comments but I think they're great! the silly fights between commenters, the unmasked-for tangents, even the random herpes spam ad: so many poetic gems! I've chosen a few of my favorites from the Reader website to illustrate. Your own comments are very welcome.



Will deliver a copy of this article to each of the aldermen at council today.



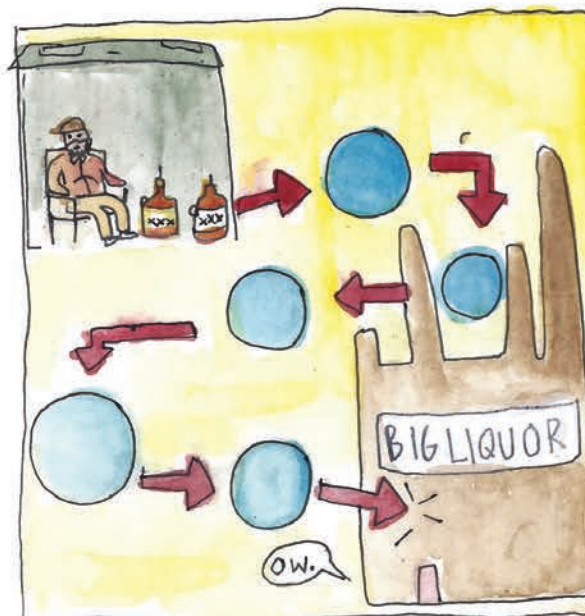
Hey snowflakes, stop pretending like the headlines offend you. Sincerely, an ashamed progressive millennial who's sick of your shit.



Congratulations, you just wrote the worst essay I have ever read.



Amour fou? Cri de cover? Please stop throwing french around. I'm a fluent speaker, but can't help finding this pretentious, if not dated!



Somebody needs to ask Mr. DeSouza to draw us out a nice series of diagrams (with circles and arrows and a paragraph on the back of each one explainin' what each one is!) to illustrate how badly the legalization of home brewed beer hurt the liquor industry.



Hey, I'm alive. Wrote a book. tell stories on stage now. You should come talk to me. Could be cool.



Hello everyone, my name is Mrs Jennifer Anderson and I am talking as the happiest person in the whole wild world today and I told my self that any lender that rescues my family from our poor situation, I will tell the name to the whole wild world and I am so happy to say that my family is back for good because I was in need a loan of hundred thousand USA to start my life all over as I am a single mum with kids and the whole world seemed like it was hanging on me until I met the GOD sent loan lender that changed my life...



Am I the only one who pictures Ms. Weiss as someone who probably very earnestly rocks out the DNC "Fight Song" video?



Reported. the only schmuck in the universe who still uses the word "teabagger."



Urban Dictionary for us unchosen few VERKLEMPt Choken with emotion. German verklempf is emotionally inhibited in a convulsive way. This is not FAKE Yiddish unless you are one of the linguists who call Yiddish a fake i.e. a nontransformational language. Ex: Oy vey. When that schmuck of a doctor told me I had cancer I got all verklempt.



God bless Dr Osalu for his marvelous work in my life. I was diagnosed of herpes simplex virus sand I was taking my medications. I wasn't satisfied, I needed to get the herpes out of my system, I searched about some possible cure for herpes and I saw a comment about Dr. Osalu, how he cured herpes with his herbal medicine, I contacted him and he guided me. I asked for solutions, he started the remedy for my health, he sent me the medicine within three days. I took the medicine as prescribed by him. Once again thank to you Dr. Osalu for cures to the flowing virus: cancer cure, diabetes cure, ringing ear, herpes cure, warts cure, HPV cure, HIV, get your ex back, pregnancy herbal medicine, prostate enlargement, and Hepatitis!



I find the term "pothead" offensive.



Margherita pizza; table bread with whipped mortadella and pickles with Bungalow beer (short glass); ful in background with Sabro Crush

© JAMIE RAMSAY

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Bungalow at Middle Brow is a house of wild ferment

Sourdough pizza, country bread, and weird beer in the new Logan Square home of this once-itinerant brewery

By **MIKE SULA**

I felt sad about the crusts. Four of us ordered three pizzas at Bungalow, the brewpub recently opened by the formerly nomadic Middle Brow Beer Company. By the time we'd hit the wall, they sat discarded in front of us like a pile of firewood—if firewood was chewy and toasty with a dark, tangy interior structure that embodies the life-affirming powers of good bread.

They were too good to waste. As we drained our last round it was decided the crusts were going home. That was until a server deposited

a dish of marinara on the table, and another packed with cheeselike cultured butter. It was as if we hadn't just crushed two-thirds of the menu, food and drink. Another round of cider was ordered, and we fell on the crusts like dogs.

Nothing kicks awake the slumbering inner bromand like the promise of pizza and beer. It was probably on the menu at your first unchaperoned party, offering your first taste of freedom with bad decisions—a pairing you've probably chased ever since.

You might find it again at Bungalow, an airy, naturally lit space in a former camera shop, with shelves of dark bread by the door, a counter facing a blazing 675-degree Pizza-Master oven, and tables and chairs set under a looming pyramid of 300-gallon foeders—the oak wood barrels that will age and ferment some of the brewery's experiments.

The pizza comes from Jess Galli, a baker returned to Chicago from San Francisco's The Mill and Josey Baker Bread, and chef-about-town Mickey Neely (Scofflaw, the Moonlighter, Dusek's, Longman & Eagle), who recruited Galli in the days when he and Middle Brow cofounder Pete Ternes were first plotting the direction the brewery's food would take.

Galli makes her pizza crust sound like a happy accident: "I didn't know what I was doing," she says when she developed the recipe. It's built on 75 percent stone-ground red wheat flour from Wisconsin, activated with a sourdough starter, and fermented for four days before it's tossed into pies and baked in the oven. She's used to working with that kind of whole-grain flour—it was the refined 00 pizza flour that threw her. In the days since I've last eaten these pizzas, I haven't thought much about anything else but the tanginess that's infused in their fluffy crumb.

They come out of the oven with blistered, highly risen crusts ringing a gradually ➔



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continued from 17

softening, somewhat Neapolitan center. Neely is responsible for what goes on top. At the moment he's making the most of the end of the winter's squash, pureeing roasted butternut bottoms and toasted seeds with a bit of mirin, the understory for arugula, mozzarella, and orange-squash shavings that are tiled on top with an intensely herbal sage salsa verde. He purees thyme-roasted cremini mushrooms with cream for a saucy, salty bottom for fontina, caramelized onions, and oyster mushrooms. Even the standard margherita has an assertive herbal aromatic punch to match these robust pies, with the scent of minced basil riding noseward on its ambient heat. There's a vegan pie with potatoes and herbs and one bearing housemade sausage and castelvetro olives, but the current lineup will change with the seasons.

Neely also provides some vegetable balance with a couple of salads, including a dark mountain of red oak leaf lettuce, cara cara orange, and fennel under a snowy shower of rasped parmesan; and a surprisingly colorful take on the normally murky Egyptian fava mash *ful*, featuring green legumes that have been pureed, bedecked with slices of purple beet-pickled eggs, crisp candy-striped chigoga beets, and ruby-red carrots.

He's also pickled the vegetables and whipped the fluffy mortadella that accompany the table bread. Who pays \$12 for bread service at a pizza joint? You're a fool if you don't. Galli's dark country bread has a slightly moist, almost cakey, sour interior that compels you to tear it to pieces and force it into your mouth as if a meaner inmate might snatch it away from you.

The pizza is available at lunch and dinner but it's in the morning when this bread takes

the stage, toasted and topped with cinnamon, sugar, and grains of paradise, or smeared with housemade ricotta and prickly pear jelly. Galli's other breads are featured here too: toasted whole grain blanketed with things like pecan butter or turmeric milk jam; sprouted German rye with herbed cream cheese. As she did at her previous job, Galli is using local, non-GMO bread flour, most of it from Wisconsin's Lonesome Stone Mill, which collects and mills grains from a variety of small farmers. The spreads are nice but the best way to approach these extraordinary loaves is also the simplest: slathered with the the funky butter Neely cultures from buttermilk reserved from his previous batch. (To sample what else Galli and Neely can come up with, check out the monthly morning ambient music series Deep Breakfast at Sleeping Village).

There's coffee to go with your toast in the morning, but the rest of the day is given to Middle Brow's beers (and a few guest taps). Middle Brow is frequently described in the beer press as an "experimental" brewery. At the moment, that's reflected in a well-rounded curation of styles, from its signature Bungalow lager, to Robyn, a citrusy saison; the spicy Belgian-style White Light; and a funky, only slightly acidic, wild-yeast-fermented spelt beer, Check the Charts. This last one will remind you that this brewpub is a happy convergence of carbohydrates that, after a few rounds, will move you to fuck it all and wantonly push butter-smear crusts into your mouthole, long after reason tells you to stop. 

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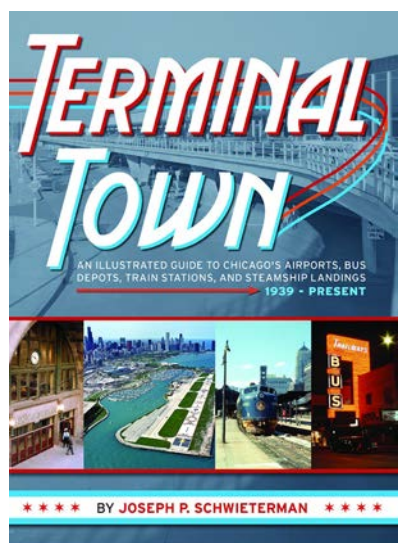
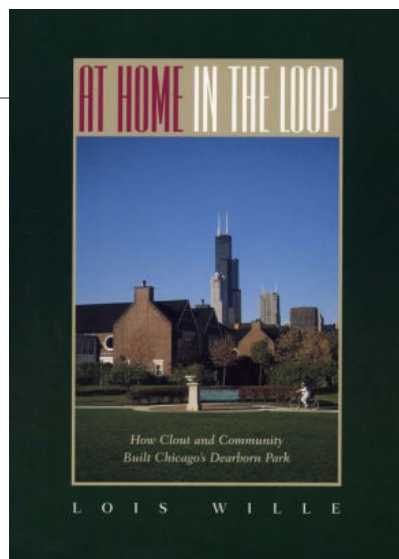
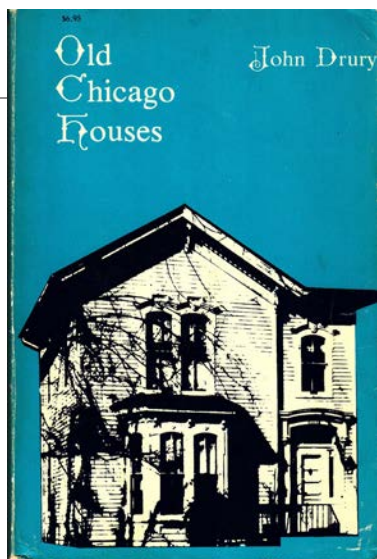
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LIT

Where Chicago came from

Four books to guide you through explorations of the city's built environment.

By MAX GRINNELL

When you read this, I have no idea what the weather will be like.

Maybe it'll be snowing. Maybe it'll be sunny. Maybe it'll be warm enough to take a stroll.

I do know that these four books offer a thoughtful and expansive introduction to Chicago's built environment. You can slip them in your bag or just carry them around with you as you wander through the city. I think of these books as providing answers to the immediacy of the world in the city's 77 community areas

as we think about their development in the past and how we might envision them in the future.

I hope they will be the start of a marvelous conversation between you and the city.

TERMINAL TOWN: AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO CHICAGO'S AIRPORTS, BUS DEPOTS, TRAIN STATIONS, AND STEAMSHIP LANDINGS, 1939-PRESENT, BY JOSEPH P. SCHWIETERMAN

When I first came to Chicago more than 25 years ago, I pulled together three different re-

sources to triangulate the exact location of the Baltimore and Ohio's Grand Central Station at Harrison and Wells. My curious obsession with this imposing structure dated back to when I learned that it was the first home to the 20th Century Limited, sometimes known as the "World's Greatest Train." As I walked up to the vacant lot, I realized I was two decades too late. It was torn down in 1971. Maybe I was better off for its absence, given that my quest also led me to wander a bit more around Printers Row.

Today's transit fans can just pick up this gracefully illustrated compendium and make their way through the past, present, and future of Chicago's transportation venues. The train station coverage is uniformly excellent and one can read about the litany of plans introduced during the 20th century to consolidate service from six Loop stations to a solo megacomplex for both intercity and commuter trains. The appendices include nice riffs on the "Terminals of Tomorrow," including thoughts on the proposed south suburban airport, Vertiport Chicago, and the bungled Block 37 superstation, arguably Chicago's most expensive publicly financed hole-in-the-ground.

I just wish that the book included Louis Sullivan's famed remark on the long-gone Illinois Central's Central Station: "Why does not the Lake engulf it? Why does not the fire from Heaven consume it?" When I first read this as a teenager, I was struck by the intensity of his prose—and his hatred.

Forty-seven years after Sullivan died, Central Station was demolished. You can find what's left of it in the grassy expanse south of the Grant Skate Park. I'm guessing you might be disappointed by what you find.

AT HOME IN THE LOOP: HOW CLOUT AND COMMUNITY BUILT CHICAGO'S DEARBORN PARK, BY LOIS WILLE

If you wander into Dearborn Park from State Street, it feels like a neat and tidy urban enclave, set apart from the rest of Chicago. These placid surroundings do not give any indication of the intense fracas that led to this planned community's creation. Forty-five years ago in this area, one could have encountered a largely quiet rail yard, a crumbling Romanesque train station and light industrial detritus.

Wille takes us on a tour through the wrangling over the site's status in the 1970s with a cast that includes George "Papa Bear" Halas, Richard J. Daley (naturally), and Mr. Mag Mile, Arthur Rubloff. If you've ever wondered why major urban redevelopment projects take so

damn long, this book is a master class in such matters. Its story seems even more relevant today given the ongoing conversation about the proposed The 78 development just a short walk away from Dearborn Park.

CHICAGO 1910-29: BUILDING, PLANNING AND URBAN TECHNOLOGY, BY CARL W. CONDIT

If you approach a friend and say, "Hey, I just read this great book about urban infrastructure," he or she may offer a perfunctory grimace or maybe a gentle nod of the head. This book may bring those folks over to the other side of bridges, tunnels, master plans, and the grandeur that was Navy (formerly Municipal) Pier.

In six thoughtful and well-arranged sections, Condit takes readers through the basics of the Chicago Plan of 1909, which would eventually bring us the Magnificent Mile and iconic cultural institutions such as the Field Museum and Shedd Aquarium. The footnotes to each chapter provide openings to various research wormholes for interested parties who want to learn more about the Lindbergh Beacon that graced the top of the Palmolive Building or the complex engineering that makes the water circulate at the Shedd Aquarium.

OLD CHICAGO HOUSES, BY JOHN DRURY

In his foreword, Drury asks a number of questions that animate those of us who are fascinated by residences, historic or otherwise: "Who built the house? Was its builder someone of importance in the past? When was it built? . . . Who lives in it now?"

The book originated as a series of columns in the *Chicago Daily News* in which Drury wandered from Norwood Park to Englewood to chronicle almost 100 homes. What could have been a deadly dull recitation of dates, architects, and accumulated fortunes turns into a lively look at these structures.

One of my favorite stories is Drury's visit to the very tiny Henry C. Work home near 53rd and Dorchester in Hyde Park. Work is known today primarily as a composer of Civil War ditties such as "Marching Through Georgia." As Drury approaches this Lilliputian structure, he notes, "As viewed today, the cottage hardly looks big enough to house a piano."

And if you wander by today with Drury's book in hand?

You'll find that the Work cottage abides, but there is now a much larger wood house tacked on to the front of the building. 

 @theurbanologist



Herland GRACIE MEIER

REVIEW

Baby, they were born to run

Herland follows three women as they age into their glory days.

By KT HAWBAKER

It's time to induct Bruce Springsteen into the Queer Icon Hall of Fame.

While some may scoff and insist that he's the Poet Laureate of Suburban White Dads, Springsteen's approaches to masculinity, nationality, and longing shaped my own understanding of desire and ambition. Give the man his official jacket and membership card. Springsteen is one of my personal queer

heroes, the Poet Laureate of Sad Grrrls Who Really Need to Leave Their Small Midwestern Towns and Feed Their Hungers—a theme that often emerges via the Boss's tunes in *Herland*, a new play by Grace McLeod now in its world premiere at Redtwist.

Think of it as an updated version of *The Golden Girls* set in Michigan and held together by rusted metal. Natalie (Simran Bal), a recent

high school grad, takes on an “internship” with Jean (Kathleen Ruhl), an elderly neighbor who is creating a DIY retirement home with her two best friends, Terry (Valerie Gorman) and Louise (Marssie Mencotti).

Alyssa Mohn's set puts the audience inside Jean's garage, an “office” flanked by unfinished walls and boxes of memories packed away indefinitely. Jean's ex-husband, the lead singer of a beloved local Springsteen cover band, used to treat the space as his dudes-only practice area; he has since left and married a younger woman, and now Jean has taken on the space as her own.

The show lands on its feet thanks to its stars. Ruhl, Gorman, and Mencotti deliver fleshed-out performances that nail the loving yet acidic chemistry of friends who've spent too much time together and know too much about each other's histories. While I think that Natalie's character and her emerging sexual identity could be a welcome entry into the narrative for younger audience members, I found myself far more invested in the lives of the three older friends.

Terry's pathway to self-actualization is particularly compelling. Now that her husband has passed, she feels freer to explore her queer impulses and starts dating other women,

RR HERLAND
Through 4/14: Thu-Sat
7:30 PM, Sun 3 PM, Redtwist
Theatre, 1044 W. Bryn Mawr,
773-728-7529, redtwist.org,
\$35-\$40, \$30-\$35 students
and seniors.

finally wearing the white suit she wishes she'd been able to wear to her first wedding. It's a meaty part filled with quiet grief and growing self-awareness, handled gracefully by Gorman.

While *Herland* has a few awkward moments—a too-long dream sequence needs a great deal more volume and energy—its women-led, DIY ethos offers an imaginative spin on aging and allows its characters dignity and agency in a culture that often disregards them. While I wouldn't call its ending happy, its painful truth is a reminder of the systems and families senior women are often up against. For a moment, here's an image of resistance, a gotta-get-out-of-here tale straight out of the Springsteen songbook. **R**

CAPSULES

RR The finest Iowa cheese
The Bridges of Madison County
remembers that romance is about the journey.

Hermetically sealed inside the idyllic heartland like a Kraft Single, *The Bridges of Madison County* is the most delicious kind of cheese. Intimately staged in Theo Ubique's new digs in Evanston, this fish-out-of-water musical follows homesick Italian immigrant Francesca as she wilts on the vine from the boredom of pleasant domesticity in Iowa. When her husband and two kids leave her home alone for a long weekend, hunky photographer Robert Kincaid conveniently shows up at her house to ask for directions.

What happens next is as predictable as any Hallmark TV movie, yet the story transcends cliché by remembering that great romance is about savoring the journey, not worrying about the destination. A refreshing rebuke to modern rom-coms led by bumbling man-children and their maddeningly simple paramours, this is a story about complex, mature adults. Leads Kelli Harrington and Tommy Thurston bring a smoldering gravitas to their performances that makes the story believable and delicious. Kate Harris and Randolph Johnson provide refreshing comic relief as an old busybody couple, and Carl Herzog shines as simple farm husband Bud, finding thoughtful levels in a role that could be one-note. The cast is made up of extremely talented singers, but Harrington's spectacular soprano is a standout.

Set against a pleasantly drowsy score gorgeously played by a five-piece orchestra led by music director Jeremy Ramey, this production sweeps you up in the magic and leaves your heart warm and fuzzy in its afterglow. —**SHERI FLANDERS** **THE BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY** Through 4/21: Thu-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 7 PM, Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre, 721 Howard St., Evanston, 773-347-1109, theo-u.com, \$34-\$69.

The other Belmont Avenue

A Bronx Tale covers up moral quandaries with feel-good doo-wop.

This 2016 musical based on Chazz Palminteri's 1989 solo show (which itself became a Robert De Niro-directed film in 1993) is a paradox. Palminteri wrote about his own life (when he was known as Calogero) around Belmont Avenue in the Bronx in the 1950s and 1960s, torn between the honest values of his bus driver father, Lorenzo, and the romantic allure of Sonny, the local gangster who runs the neighborhood. Yet it evokes so many other influences—from *GoodFellas* to *West Side Story*—that Palminteri's personal story occasionally feels like a comic riff on earlier tales.

Part of the problem is that the score by Alan Menken and Glenn Slater doesn't work too hard to transcend doo-wop nostalgia trappings. The songs in this coming-of-age story are serviceable, but far from memorable, and they tend to provide feel-good cover for the moral quandaries in Palminteri's book, rather than illuminating them. (The first quandary involves a young Calogero covering up for Sonny's cold-blooded murder of a man in front of his house.)

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THEATER



The Bridges of Madison County
CODY JOLLY

Thankfully, the cast in this touring version of the Broadway production (directed by De Niro and Jerry Zaks) deliver performances both fresh and assured. Richard H. Blake's Lorenzo and Joe Barbara's Sonny both have smart and heartfelt—if divergent—paternal advice for Calogero. Brianna-Marie Bell as Jane, the black girl Calogero falls for, is incandescent in an underwritten role, and Joey Barreiro as teenage Calogero nails the vulnerable boy trying to pass himself off as a budding tough. —**KERRY REID** *A BRONX TALE* Through 3/24: Wed 2 and 7:30 PM, Thu-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 2 and 8 PM, Sun 2 PM, Tue 7:30 PM, James M. Nederlander Theatre, 24 W. Randolph, 800-775-2000, broadwayinchicago.com, \$27-\$98.

Arab culture 101

Detour Guide isn't quite sure where it's going.

At the beginning of this discursive one-man show, a Silk Road Rising/Stage Left coproduction, Egyptian-American musician and storyteller Karim Nagi announces he's taking his audience on a fanciful junket through the Arab world in order to counter the pervasive Western misrepresentations that reduce some 423 million people across 22 countries to mystical genies, exotic seductresses, or extremist terrorists—or, in Nagi's characteristically glib yet piquant phraseology, to Aladdin, Jasmine, or Jafar. It's an admirable goal, given the global carnage that results from the relentless othering of Arabs, but like the unwieldy tuk-tuk that's supposed to carry us "tourists" along yet never gets put to much meaningful use, it's difficult to know where this tour is headed.

Nagi adopts a playful persona, delighting in cultural customs that, in his estimation, demonstrate a distinct Arab sensibility. Much of this exploration is done through regional rhythm and dance, as Nagi plays his day-glo tabla like a virtuoso while dancing and/or telling stories in rhyming couplets. But he also finds time to lampoon and humanize daily rituals: Arabs, he says, enjoy clapping along to every song, overeating, and talking politics in small rooms, yelling at people who likely agree with them.

He also drops in a few character sketches, personal confessions, and disappointingly toothless cultural criticism (pointing out "orientalist" stereotyping in the fossilized 1955 film *Kismet* seems particularly facile). By the halfway point, when he's turned the Arab Spring into a five-minute spoken-word piece, it seems Nagi's

assembling pieces without knowing what he's building. —**JUSTIN HAYFORD** *DETOUR GUIDE* Through 4/7: Fri-Sat 8 PM, Sun 4 PM, Mon-Tue 7:30 PM, Silk Road Rising, 77 W. Washington, 312-857-1234, silkroadrising.org, \$38, \$20.50 students.

'If you want something, keep your hands on it'

Hands on a Hardbody is full of all sorts of uplifting lessons.

Based on S.R. Bindler's 1997 documentary of the same name, this 2012 Broadway musical focuses on an annual Texas endurance competition in which contestants vie for a pickup truck by touching it. Whoever keeps a hand on longest wins. Meaning you end up with a musical where all the major characters spend most of the show standing around within arm's length of a pickup truck.

But in contemporary American musical theater, even doing nothing presents fine excuses for uplifting lessons in constancy and devotion. "If you want something, keep your hands on it," the weary contestants sing—somehow straight-faced—in the necessarily rousing finale. And of course the way there is paved with calculatedly darkish confessional numbers, de rigueur gospel digressions, and Ballads of Big Dreams (she wants to be a world traveler, he a Hollywood stuntman . . .). In lieu of a plot, co-creators Doug Wright, Amanda Green, and Trey Anastasio string together isolated character portraits, unsuccessfully filling the cracks with bits of inter-constant intrigue.

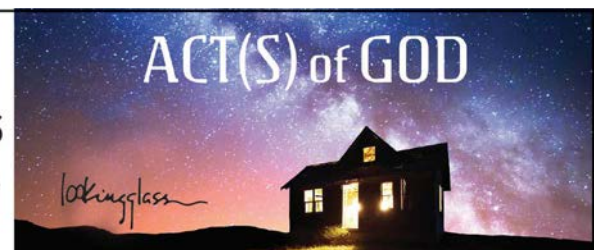
It's all so transparent it's embarrassing, but director Christopher Pazdernik has assembled a cast for Refuge Theatre Project who sing the stuffing out of the cut-and-paste score. The five-piece band ain't bad either. At its most ambitious, the show attempts to lionize the working poor, albeit working poor stuck to a truck, but employing the sort of emotional shorthand that turns most everything to treacle, hokum, and bathos. After all, this is a world where all anyone needs to confess their darkest secrets is a stirring four-bar intro —**JUSTIN HAYFORD** *HANDS ON A HARDBODY* Through 4/27: Fri-Sun 8 PM; also Mon 4/1 and Thu 4/4, 8 PM; no performances Fri 4/5 and Sat 4/6, Preston Bradley Center, 941 W. Lawrence, refugetheatre.com, \$30.

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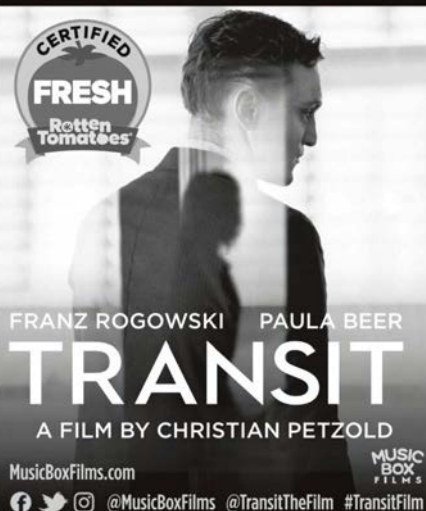
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FILM

NOW PLAYING

The Aftermath

The value of Rhidian Brook's novel, from which this film is adapted, is the ground-zero view of firebombed post-World War II Hamburg by its surviving Germans—from starving street urchins, to middle-class adults who were not Nazi Party members but who suffer all the burdens and humiliations of defeat nonetheless, to hostile teenagers who still revere Hitler and plot terrorist attacks against the Allied occupying forces. As one of the screenwriters, Brook presumably signed off on the massive changes made to his original work, but in so doing, he squandered the opportunity for a more nuanced film. After all the gutting of the book's supporting characters and backstories, what's left is a tastefully decorous love triangle between an English army commissioner in charge of rebuilding Germany in the UK zone (Jason Clarke); his emotionally damaged wife (Keira Knightley), still mourning the death of their son during a German bombing; and the widowed German architect (Alexander Skarsgård) whose stately home the victors requisition, but whom the British "guy" magnanimously invites to stay on, since there's way too much room there for just him and the missus. Knightley's character is—hello!—more sympathetic and sensual than in the novel, while Clarke's is more one-dimensional, to the point of caricature. Only Skarsgård is persuasive as a bereft man trying to make the best of his diminished circumstances, who against all reason finds himself falling for the officer's wife. The production design is superb; unsurprisingly, the film spends as little time among the ruins as possible, lingering instead on the luscious modern interiors of the architect's mansion on the Elbe. James Kent (*Testament of Youth*) directed. —**ANDREA GRONVALL** *R*, 108 min. *At Landmark's Century Cinema. Visit landmarktheatres.com for showtimes.*

Before the Devil Knows You're Dead

I prefer Sidney Lumet's previous feature, the neglected *Find Me Guilty*. But this ambitious and well-directed crime thriller (2007), with an intricate flashback structure redolent of *Reservoir Dogs*, gives Philip Seymour Hoffman a fascinatingly ambiguous character (a passive-aggressive corporate executive and drug addict) to work with, and he does wonders with the part. Marisa Tomei's character, on the other hand, the executive's wife and the lover of his softer loser brother (Ethan Hawke), is strictly standard-issue. This tale of buried family resentments rising to the surface as the brothers plot to rob their parents' jewelry store is concerned only with the guys, and it's marred by an uncharacteristically mannered performance by Albert Finney as the father. —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** *R*, 117 min. *Fri 3/22-Mon 3/25, 11 PM. Logan*

Captive State

It will be interesting to look back on disaster films of this period and consider how many of them could be interpreted as Trump-era allegories. This one, set in Chicago in the year 2027, has a juicy premise: nine years earlier, a grotesque alien species invaded Earth, and instead of fighting back, most humans, including those who ran the governments, capitulated. Nevertheless, resistance grew in major cities. The film swings between following a cadre of insurgents in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood and the alien-loyal police on their tail. Written and directed by Rupert Wyatt (*Rise of the Planet of the*

The Aftermath
DAVID APPELBY



Apes), this thriller drags in stretches and frequently rings nonsensical. Overall it's a mess, compounded by murky CGI and some unrealistic performances. John Goodman is solid as a shifty police commander, but the narrative fails to hide his character's motivations. —**LEAH PICKETT** *PG-13, 110 min. Century 12 and CineArts 6, Showplace Galewood Crossings*

Coincoin and the Extra-Humans

The ascetic French filmmaker Bruno Dumont made an unexpected turn into absurdism with his 2014 miniseries *Li'l Quinquin*, and this 2018 follow-up is even sillier than its predecessor, with more puns, slapstick, and scatological jokes. What makes both works so entrancingly odd isn't the non-sequitur humor or cartoonish characterizations, but rather the fact that Dumont presents them in the same rigorous, Bressonian aesthetic he's advanced since his debut feature, *The Life of Jesus* (1997). We're not meant to take the plot at all seriously, yet the actors and northern French landscapes exude a forbidding dignity all the same. In this story the mischievous yet affectless youth Quinquin (now a teenager who goes by CoinCoin) seems unperturbed that his rural community has been invaded by extraterrestrials assuming the forms of local residents. Also back is the ruminative police captain Van der Weyden (and his collection of facial ticks); he investigates the invasion with the same lovable ineptitude that he brought to the serial murders in the first series. In French with subtitles. —**BEN SACHS** *205 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Sat 3/23, 2 PM, and Thu 3/28, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

Ether

Prior to its didactic, unnecessary coda, this creepy period drama is one of the strongest films director Krzysztof Zanussi has made since the 1980s. Set in the years before World War I, it follows an amoral Polish doctor obsessed with experimenting with anesthetics, no matter the human cost. After a stint in prison, he goes to work for the Austro-Hungarian military, where openly corrupt officers allow him to conduct whatever twisted studies he wants. Zanussi has been all too quick to condemn his characters' moral failings in much of his later work (such as *And a Warm Heart* and *Foreign Body*), but here he employs a coldly inquisitive style that hearkens back to his best, most open-ended films (*The Illumination*, *The Constant Factor*). Shooting many of the scenes in mobile single takes, Zanussi generates an unsettling

sense of moral ambiguity and a clinical fascination with his antihero's behavior. Unfortunately Zanussi dashes those qualities in the last ten minutes, preventing this film from truly getting under one's skin. In Polish with subtitles. —**BEN SACHS** *118 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Fri 3/22, 6 PM, and Wed 3/27, 7:45 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

Five Feet Apart

Clearly inspired by *The Fault in Our Stars* and the late Claire Wineland's YouTube videos, this romantic drama revolves around two 17-year-olds with cystic fibrosis. The girl (Haley Lu Richardson), who makes cheery videos to educate the public about CF, finds comfort in list-making and routines. The boy (Cole Sprouse, Gen Z's answer to Leonardo DiCaprio) is a jaded rule breaker. They find themselves in the same hospital while the boy participates in a clinical drug trial. Because of their high risk of fatal infection-swapping, hospital rules dictate that the teens keep six feet between them at all times. Of course, they rebel. Director Justin Baldoni, working from a novel by Rachael Lippincott and drawing from his work on the digital documentary series *My Last Days*, imbues the hospital and its inhabitants with a lived-in feel that sometimes counteracts the predictable truisms, musical swells, and heartstring yanks. While mawkishness should not be a prerequisite for the sick-teens-in-love genre, the popularity of the two in concert has likely convinced many filmmakers that the opposite is true. —**LEAH PICKETT** *PG-13, 116 min. AMC Dine-in Block 37, Cicero Showplace 14, Showplace 14 Galewood Crossings*

Ghost World

Terry Zwigoff (*Crumb*) brilliantly negotiates the shift to fiction filmmaking in a very personal adaptation (2001) of the Daniel Clowes comic book, which either captures with uncanny precision what it's like to be a teenage girl in this country or fooled me utterly into thinking it does. Thora Birch (*American Beauty*) plays Enid, a comic book artist who plans to share an apartment with her best friend Rebecca (Scarlett Johansson) and befriends Seymour (Steve Buscemi), a lonely, much older collector of rare blues and jazz 78s, shortly after she almost graduates from high school. To get a diploma, she has to take an art course over the summer, and our glimpses of this add up to the funniest portrait of American "art appreciation" I've ever seen. Never predictable, this movie is often hilarious as well as touching, subtly adapting the mise-en-scene of Clowes's original without being fancy or obtrusive about it. With Brad

Renfro and Bob Balaban. —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** *R*, 111 min. 35mm. Mon 3/25, 7 PM. Music Box

Jerichow

After the assured metaphysical thriller *Yella* (2007), German writer-director Christian Petzold takes a crack at *The Postman Always Rings Twice* with this low-key thriller (2008) about a love triangle that festers into a murder plot. In a semirural area west of Berlin, a Turkish immigrant with a snack-machine business (Hilmi Sozer) loses his driver's license for driving drunk, so he hires a down-and-out army vet (Benno Furmann) to chauffeur him on his rounds servicing his machines; during his off-hours, the new employee services the boss's sexy, self-contained wife (smoldering Nina Hoss, who played the title character in *Yella*). At least one online critic has likened the film to Fassbinder's Sirkian melodramas, though Petzold cites as an influence Minnelli's *Some Came Running*; in any case he doesn't seem to have much invested in this personally, though it's undeniably well executed. In German with subtitles. —**J.R. JONES** 93 min. 35mm. Sat 3/23-Sun 3/24, 11:30 AM. Music Box

N Lajkó—Gypsy in Space

The title character of this politically incorrect Hungarian satire is a man from an itinerant Romani family who gets drafted into the Soviet Union's cosmonaut program in the late 1950s. He's long dreamed of aeronautical travel—the movie opens with the hero as a boy transforming the family outhouse into a rocket—and when he



The Mustang FOCUS FEATURES

finds himself an astronaut in training, he can't believe his good fortune. But he soon discovers dark secrets about the Soviets that make him reconsider wanting to go to space. Along the way there are broad jokes about cultural stereotypes; homosexual repression; the hero's horny, thieving father; Josef Mengele; and gulags. The whole enterprise suggests a historically minded, visually ambitious Mel Brooks. Balázs Lengyel, directing a script he wrote with Balázs Lovas, has fun spoofing the Soviet propaganda machine, and the agreeable bad-taste humor seems to grow out of the historical irreverence. In subtitled Hungarian, Russian, and German. —**BEN SACHS** 90 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Sat 3/23, 8:30 PM, and Thu 3/28, 8:15 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

RR N The Mustang

The simple, lean narrative and the starkness of its setting lend a mythic quality to this moving contemporary drama about finding redemption and a meaningful life. For most of the felons in a cramped, isolated prison in the Nevada desert, the American west is not the land of promise and wide-open spaces, but a dead end—particularly for a moody violent offender played by Matthias Schoenaerts (*Rust and Bone*), frequently in solitary confinement for "anger management" issues. But the prison shrink (Connie Britton) and the grizzled cowpoke in charge of an inmate work program (Bruce Dern) see something in him, and the convict joins a crew to tame wild mustangs, going toe to toe with

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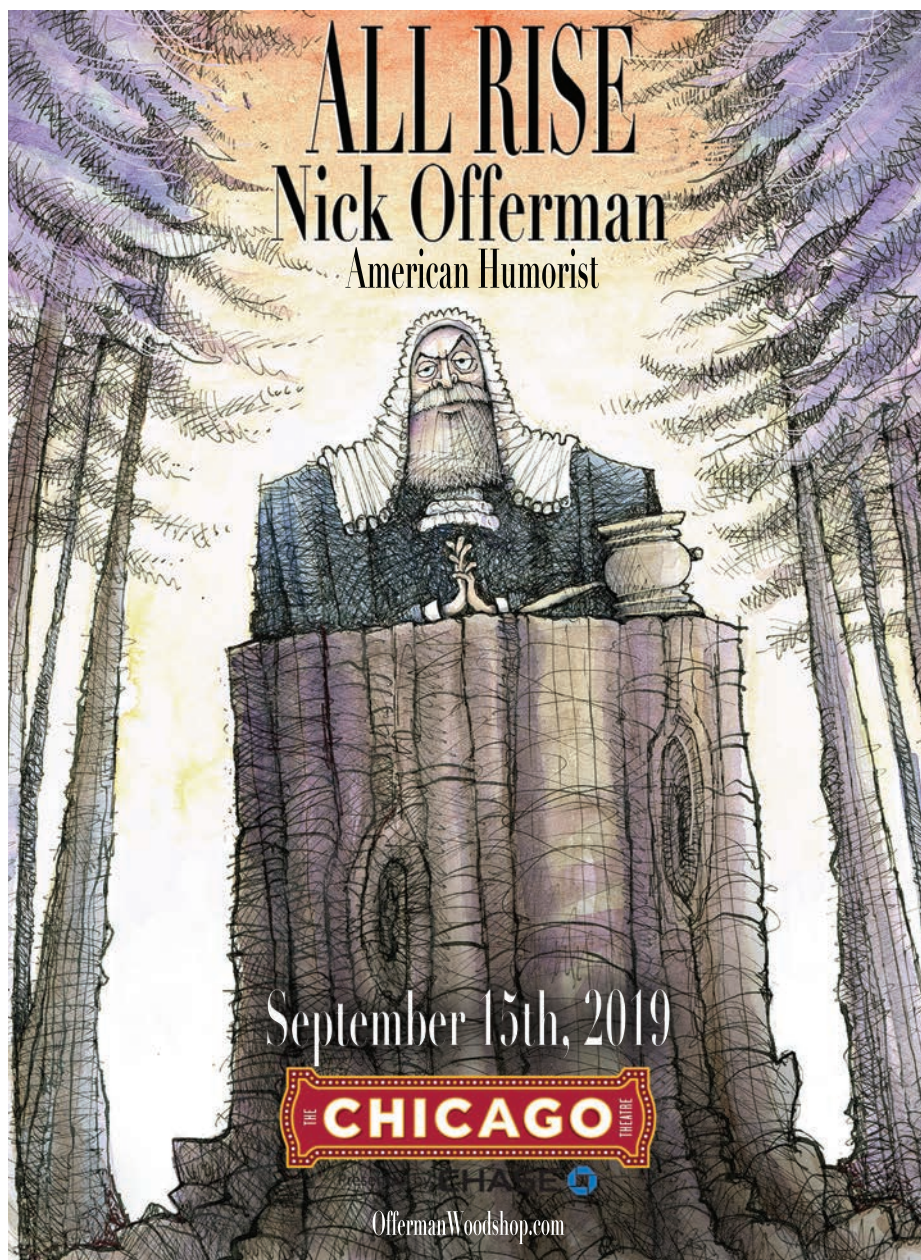
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➔ a horse that has a harder head than his own. Cinematographer Ruben Impens (*Beautiful Boy*) deftly plays with light and shadow to deliver one gorgeous image after another, such as a blood-orange sunrise filtered through blowing sand, and galloping equines that could be lifted from a Grecian urn. This film was developed at Robert Redford's Sundance Institute lab for emerging talent; he certainly found one in French actress Laure de Clermont-Tonnerre, here making an impressive feature directorial debut. —**ANDREA GRONVALL** *R*, 96 min. *At Landmark's Century Cinema. Visit landmarktheatres.com for showtimes.*

The Rocky Horror Picture Show

This 1975 film version of the bisexual-chic rock musical tries its damndest to be outrageous, but finally has a hard time justifying its R rating. The picture might have made a pretty good college show—with Dr. Frank N. Furter (Tim Curry) sewing up a homemade stud to the accompaniment of a sexually ambiguous kick line (the chorines all look strangely like Lina Wertmüller). But the wit is too weak to sustain a film, and the songs all sound the same. Directed by Jim Sharman. —**DAVE KEHR** *R*, 100 min. 35mm. Sat 3/23, midnight. Music Box

The Room

Written, produced, and directed by Tommy Wiseau, this inept 2003 melodrama has become a *Rocky Horror*-style cult favorite. Wiseau stars as an eerily placid and good-natured banker whose live-in girlfriend is secretly getting it on with his best friend, though the filmmaker often strikes out in different directions, only to bump into the wall and come back. As someone who's watched more bad movies than you can imagine, I'm mostly immune to the so-bad-it's-good aesthetic, though I can see how, viewed in a theater at midnight after a few drinks, this might conjure up its own hilariously demented reality. Poignantly, Wiseau has now repositioned the movie as a "black comedy." —**J.R. JONES** *2010 R*, 99 min. 35mm. Fri 3/22, midnight. Music Box

THX 1138

George Lucas's feature-length 1971 expansion of his student short is a strange beginning for one of the most consistently crowd-pleasing careers in recent film history. Robert Duvall is a reluctant zombie trying to escape a repressive society of the future, which is resourcefully evoked through location shooting in underground garages and San Francisco's subway system. Muddled and hopelessly artsy, but at least Lucas got it out of his system early on. —**DAVE KEHR** *R*, 86 min. Tue 3/26–Thu 3/28, 10:30 PM. Logan

RR **N** Woman at War

One of the best movies of 2018, this strikingly original and immensely entertaining second narrative feature by Icelandic filmmaker Benedikt Erlingsson (*Of Horses and Men*) transcends genre: it's a high-spirited cocktail of rugged adventure, political satire, environmental advocacy, and family saga, with a garnish of screwball comedy. Set during Iceland's 2008–2011 financial crisis, the movie is powered by Halldóra Geirharðsdóttir's athletic performance as the Mountain Woman, an eco-warrior determined to sabotage Chinese investment in heavy industry that could jump-start her country's economy but would pollute its air and landscape. (In a dual role, the actress also plays Mountain Woman's twin sister, a New Age-y yoga instructor.) As the activist's mission to galvanize her fellow citizens nears completion, she learns her application to adopt a Ukrainian orphan has finally been approved; with

the clock ticking, she starts making dangerous errors. Erlingsson spices the dramatic tension with disarming oddball touches like a trio of female Ukrainian folk singers who act as a kind of Greek chorus; the three-man orchestra that follows the lead on her journeys, occasionally breaking the fourth wall with deadpan looks at the audience; and a sad sack Hispanic tourist with a knack for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. In Icelandic, Ukrainian, and Spanish with subtitles. —**ANDREA GRONVALL** *101 min. At Music Box Theatre. Visit musicboxtheatre.com for showtimes.*

ALSO PLAYING

N Another Day of Life

Raúl de la Fuente and Damian Nenow directed this animated Polish/Spanish account of Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski's experiences in war-ravaged Angola in 1975. In English and subtitled Portuguese, Polish, and Spanish. 85 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Fri 3/22, 4:15 PM, and Mon 3/25, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

N Bauhaus Spirit: 100 Years of Bauhaus

Niels Bolbrinker and Thomas Tielsch directed this German documentary about the influential 20th-century art and design movement. In English and subtitled German and Spanish. 90 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Sun 3/24, 3:15 PM, and Wed 3/27, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

N Consequences

Darko Stante directed this Slovenian/Austrian drama about a closeted teen who is sent to a youth detention center. In Slovenian with subtitles. 95 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Sun 3/24, 5:15 PM, and Tue 3/26, 8:15 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

The Ex-Wife

Katja Wik directed this 2017 Swedish drama that follows three relationship storylines, about an ex-wife, a wife, and a girlfriend. In Swedish with subtitles. 89 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Fri 3/22, 8:15 PM, and Sat 3/23, 2 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

N The Eyes of Orson Welles

Mark Cousins directed this UK documentary-essay film that explores celebrated filmmaker Orson Welles's creative vision, inspired by a recently found collection of his early paintings and sketches. 115 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Fri 3/22, 2 PM, and Tue 3/26, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

N Ferrante Fever

Giacomo Durzi directed this 2017 Italian documentary about pseudonymous author Elena Ferrante, whose Neapolitan novels were a world-wide sensation. In English and subtitled Italian. 72 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Durzi attends the screenings. Sat 3/23, 6 PM, and Mon 3/25, 7:45 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

N The Highwaymen

Kevin Costner and Woody Harrelson star as the former Texas Rangers charged with attempting to capture outlaw bandits Bonnie and Clyde. John Lee Hancock

FILM

directed. With Kathy Bates, John Carroll Lynch, and Kim Dickens. R, 132 min. [Streaming on Netflix](#)

N Homo Novus

Anna Viduleja directed this Latvian comedy about a newly-arrived painter in 1930s Riga. In Latvian with subtitles. 90 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Sun 3/24, 5:30 PM, and Wed 3/27, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

N The Hummingbird Project

Kim Nguyen directed this Belgian-Canadian thriller about high-frequency stock traders. With Jesse Eisenberg, Alexander Skarsgård, Michael Mando, and Salma Hayek. R, 110 min. [At Landmark's Century Cinema. Visit \[landmarktheatres.com\]\(http://landmarktheatres.com\) for showtimes.](#)

N Island of the Hungry Ghosts

Gabrielle Brady directed this documentary about the migration of millions of crabs across Australia's Christmas Island. In English and subtitled Farsi, French, and Mandarin. 98 min. At Facets Cinéma. Visit facets.org for showtimes.

N Joe Frank—Somewhere Out There

D.P. Carlson directed this documentary about radio personality and audio artist Joe Frank. 86 min. Carlson attends the screening. Sun 3/24, 7 PM. Davis

N The Last Note

Pantelis Voulgaris directed this 2017 Greek historical drama about the circumstances around the Nazis' execution of 200 Greek partisans in 1944. In Greek with subtitles. 117 min. Fri 3/22 and Tue 3/26, 8:15 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

N Laugh or Die

After the end of the Finnish Civil War in 1918, a comedian finds himself a prisoner in a German-run concentration camp and must use his comedic skills to stay alive. Heikki Kujanpää directed. In Finnish and German with subtitles. 99 min. Fri 3/22, 4 PM, and Mon 3/25, 8 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

My Art

Artist Laurie Simmons directed and stars in this 2016 feature about a NYC artist hoping to reenergize her stalled career. 86 min. Tue 3/26, 2 PM. Museum of Contemporary Art

N Ray & Liz

Photographer, artist, and documentarian Richard Billingham directed this autobiographical narrative debut about his parents and his and his brother's youth in the poor council flats in 1980s England. 108 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Fri 3/22, 6 PM, and Sat 3/23, 3:45 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

Sci-Fi Spectacular

A 14-hour marathon screening of science fiction and fantasy features and shorts, including *Village of the Damned*, *The Omega Man*, *Time After Time*, *Mars Attacks!*, *Phantom of the Paradise*, *Critters*, and *Running Man*. Sat 3/23, 11:15 AM. Davis

Sparring

An aging boxer takes on a dangerous job as a sparring partner for a top fighter. Samuel Jouy directed this 2017 French drama. In French with subtitles. 95 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Fri 3/22, 2 PM, and Mon 3/25, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

N The Summer House

A filmmaker retreats to her family's resort villa after a romantic breakup, and is visited by the ghost of her dead brother. Valeria Bruni Tedeschi directed this Italian/French comedy. In Italian and French with subtitles. 123 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Sun 3/24, 3 PM, and Wed 3/27, 7:45 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

Word of God

Henrik Ruben Genz directed this 2017 Danish comedy-drama about an eccentric patriarch whose strange ways set his sons on a path to revolt. In Danish with subtitles. 118 min. Sat 3/23, 8:15 PM, and Tue 3/26, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

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Facs cut their last tether



The Chicago postpunks inherited members from Disappears, but they've found the personnel and the sound to become a self-contained band.

By KEVIN WARWICK

© ZORAN ORLIC

DRAB MAJESTY, Facs
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300 N. Central Park, \$30,
\$25 in advance, all ages

There's a notorious quote from the dearly departed Mark E. Smith that goes like this: "If it's me and your granny on bongos, it's the Fall." It's tempting to read this as Smith claiming that he was the sole crucial member throughout the prolific postpunk outfit's four decades of constantly mutating lineups—and it's true that when Smith came onstage, you knew what band you were getting. But it can also mean something very different: that the Fall's sound was about musical chemistry, about holistic connections among players, rather than about conventional competence or lone genius.

When I interview Chicago postpunk band Facs at Cafe Marie-Jeanne in Humboldt Park, guitarist and vocalist Brian Case brings up that quote. He laughs about it too—if there's a Mark E. Smith figure in Facs, it's him, but he's much less inclined to claim the role. Not least because his bandmates, bassist Alianna Kalaba and drummer Noah Leger, are sitting with him.

"I say that line in my head constantly," Case explains. "The Fall have always been an inspi-

ration—because it never mattered who was in the room. I'm much more drawn to interaction and circumstance than individual guitar players." He does allow, though, that Johnny Marr, Thurston Moore, or both would make him pretty happy.

On the second Facs full-length, *Lifelike* (out March 29 via Chicago label Trouble in Mind), Case, Kalaba, and Leger have created a very good set of circumstances. Like the Fall, they're drawn to exploration in songwriting, to finding territory that's new to them. Some members of Smith's revolving-door lineup were novices to their instruments, for example, which created its own set of unorthodox possibilities; Kalaba is usually a drummer, not a bassist, which gives her a distinctive rapport with Leger. Unlike the Fall, Facs are able to undertake this exploration by virtue of mutual trust—they're not forced into it by constant turnover.

Sitting with all three members for an hour, I get a feel for the comfort they have with one another as musicians. Their repartee is relaxed, practically peaceful, as they bounce

among memories of coming up in the Chicago scene decades earlier. They've all played in a long list of bands, but in the late 90s and early 00s, Kalaba was in We Ragazzi, Case was in 90 Day Men, and Leger was in Milemarker. The symbiosis they've developed isn't lost on any of them—they engineered it themselves, and they comment on it often. When Case and Leger needed to fill a gap in the Facs lineup, they sought out Kalaba because they already knew they got along with her.

Facs predecessor Disappears disbanded in late 2016, ending their eight-year run as one of Chicago's more innovative and critically praised rock acts. At the time, the band and their label, Kranky, barely made a peep about it. Disappears bassist Damon Carruesco was out, and the other three members—Case, Leger, and guitarist Jonathan van Herik—would go on to form Facs. Their reluctance to comment wasn't an attempt to control the narrative so much as a consequence of the fact that they weren't actually done.

"We made a conscious decision not to talk about the dissolution of Disappears. ➔

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Facs, from left: Noah Leger, Alianna Kalaba, and Brian Case  ZORAN ORLIC

continued from 26

There was no press release about it, no “This thing is finished,” explains Leger. “We quickly figured out that a new ingredient was having three people instead of four. The space that inherently comes with one less person gave us new ideas.”

From the start, Facs were different by design. Gone were the waves of billowy guitars and the apparent dread of approaching any sort of melody. (“There was almost an unspoken rule in Disappears: no melody,” Case jokes.) The cold creak of Case’s vocals was still recognizable, but much of Disappears’ noisy bravado was swallowed up in welcome negative space. Facs felt threadbare by comparison. “There were just certain things Disappears could be musically and certain things it couldn’t be. It was time to reinterpret that,” Leger says.

At the inception of Facs, Case moved to bass, shaking up the old Disappears dynamic even further—he’d been a guitarist in every other significant project he’d worked on. This affected more than his approach to songwriting: “I had to learn how to dance again,” he says. “I couldn’t figure out how to play bass and move.”

Trouble in Mind released the first document of that shakeup, *Negative Houses*, on March 30, 2018. Facs made their recorded debut a

little more than a year after their live debut—in January 2017, they’d opened a Joan of Arc record-release party. Case and Leger acknowledge that *Negative Houses* shares some of the winding, expansive aesthetic of Disappears, because the Facs lineup was still simply three-fourths of that band. It’s audible in how Van Herik melts his guitar effects down the backs of *Negative Houses* tracks such as “Primary” and “Just a Mirror.”

But the first Facs record also clearly breaks with Disappears, both in its minimalist postpunk bent and in Case’s new role. The transition to bass seems to have been out of necessity, but he claims he doesn’t regret it. “I learned a lot from not playing guitar in the beginning. I could sort of refocus. I didn’t feel like I was repeating myself in Disappears, but I didn’t feel like I was getting outside my own box as much as I wanted,” he explains. “That being said, I was very happy to switch back to guitar.”

Case had switched back when Van Herik abruptly and unexpectedly left Facs in December 2017, a few months after the recording of *Negative Houses* and a few months before its release. “I think that Jonathan was just ready to be done. No judgment. We played a thousand great shows together,” says Leger. “When I first started playing with Disappears, it was right after *Pre Language* and he was playing

these big lush chords and using lots of effects to make these big sounds. And through the last couple of Disappears records, his sound kind of tightened up. And then on *Negative Houses* his sound was super minimal. He had a really big sound, and then it got smaller and smaller, tighter and tighter. And then it just stopped.”

Case and Leger knew they had to find a replacement on bass quickly, with a release concert scheduled for March 30. They weren’t exactly looking for someone’s granny to play bongos, but they didn’t care if they found a virtuoso with 20 years of experience—they preferred a bandmate they trusted and wanted to spend time with.

Kalaba joined in January and began adapting to the role of bassist. “The release show for *Negative Houses* was actually the first time I ever played onstage in that way,” she says. “I was excited but a little scared to be at the front of the stage—I’m used to hiding behind a drum kit.”

Kalaba had moved back to the city from the Bay Area in 2017 to be closer with family and reconnect with old friends—among them Leger and Case. Right now she’s on tour as the drummer in Cat Power’s band, but 15 or 20 years ago, she was coming up in the same indie-rock scene that they were, drumming in We Ragazzi, the Dishes, and other groups. She was such a good fit for Facs that nobody much

cared about her lack of onstage experience as a bassist.

“The last Disappears tour, we were opening for Explosions in the Sky [in Oakland], and Alianna said she was moving back to Chicago. We hadn’t seen each other in a while, but I was like, ‘When you get back, let’s play together,’” Case remembers. “Fast-forward one year, and Disappears has broken up and all of a sudden we’re playing together.”

Lifelike is the first Facs recording to feature Kalaba, and the first one on which the band don’t feel like merely an extension of Disappears. The trio’s narrative will forever be inextricably tied to Disappears, but their sound no longer is. Case provides much of that new distinctiveness with his command of guitar and his eagerness to search out different textures and metabolisms—but he’s provided the luxury to do so largely by the tight interplay between Leger and Kalaba.

“If you have a good rhythm section, it doesn’t matter what the guitars do. No one fucking cares,” Case says. “And I totally believe that. Just listen to the way the record is mixed . . . it’s drums and bass. The guitar line on ‘Another Country’ is nonsense. I can be as weird as I want—which is all I really want.”

“Nonsense” is a tad self-deprecating, of course. The cycling riff on “Another Country” sounds like dozens of wind chimes caught

in a three-second glitch in time—its pattern repeats in its own orbit, independent of the bass and drums, so fluidly that it's hard to hear its edges. It's one of *Lifelike*'s most fascinating gestures. But Case isn't exaggerating about the way the album pushes the rhythm section to the foreground. It was recorded and mixed by Jeremy Lemos and John Congleton, respectively, both of whom have collaborated with the members of Facs for years, either in side projects or in Disappears. Their work places the bond between Leger and Kalaba, and the pocket they settle into as Case wanders off the ranch, at the heart of *Lifelike*. It's not only there on the album's six tracks—I can also hear it in my interview, as they happily analyze their alliance and compliment each other's drummerly instincts. Takes one to know one, I guess.

"A lot of our songs fit together like a strange sort of puzzle, and because Alianna plays bass like a drummer, the way the other components go together is very intuitive," explains Leger, who also drums in instrumental-rock trio Electric Hawk.

"We're breathing together to find that groove," Kalaba replies. "Counting with Noah, I always know he's going to be there at the right moment, at the right time. It's one less worry."

The harmony between all three components of Facs is best realized on "In Time," which for good reason became the first single from *Lifelike* on January 23. Case isn't necessarily averse to melody—you can find some in the mathy, experimental indie rock of 90 Day Men, as well as in Disappears and Acteurs, his dark electronic project with Lemos—but he's definitely curious about alternative ways to navigate it. Imagine being on a road trip and exiting the highway to take a roundabout route—only you're not taking the detour just for the scenery, you're also doing it to see if you can find your way back to the highway.

"In Time" is as direct a route as Case has driven in a long time. Held steady by Leger's skittering, kick-drum-heavy beat and Kalaba's distorted, high-sustain bass, the track embraces its melody—as dark as it is—rather than drowning it in noise. Case understands why Facs are so widely seen by critics as amelodic, bleak, and minimal, but the movement and structure of "In Time" might change some minds. "It's got a four-chord progression, which hasn't happened out of my body in ten years at least," he jokes.

On *Lifelike* Facs also continue to mold tracks from sounds that aren't necessarily notes or riffs—sometimes they're just noises.

On "Anti-Body," for instance, Case's swirling, shrill guitar circles the choppy rhythm laid down by Leger and Kalaba, then mutates into a discordant, pounding chord. It doesn't push against the tide of the track as much as it cuts horizontally right through it. "Anti-Body" feels almost blissfully dystopic, like watching the sky burn while a double rainbow lights up the horizon. The second half of the eight-plus-minute closing track "Total History" pulls off a similar trick.

"Brian will sometimes come in with what he thinks of as a part but to me is more of a sound," Leger explains. "At first it was confusing, because I'd think, 'That's a really interesting sound—what does it have to do with a song?' Over time we learned that given the right conditions an interesting sound will blossom into a bunch of different parts with a storyline."

Case, Kalaba, and Leger would probably unanimously agree that they've set things up not only to give Facs an identity of their own but also to allow them to continue to develop past this record. Each of the three members has been around the block—for decades, they've done the writing, released the records, taken the tours. If the work continues to be its own gift—if nobody's still waiting to get rich or famous—then why stop now?

"This band is therapeutic for me, and I look forward to playing with these guys," Kalaba says. "For me personally, I would dissolve if I didn't play music. It would be like not being able to tell someone how you feel."

"We're realistic about what we're doing, but we can still do things that satisfy us, help out our label," Case explains. "Even if we never did a tour or released another record, for me the most fun is being at the practice space, writing a song, and playing it right the first time all the way through."

"It's why I moved to Chicago in '98—to do stuff like this," Leger adds. "We played a gig in Montreal, and the kids blew the fucking doors off the place. We were so well received. After our set a dance party erupted. The DJ gave me a fistful of mushrooms. We stayed with a friend, and the cops came to his house at 4:30 in the morning. I had to talk to the cops. I was tripping. That's why I still go on tour."

Facs have arrived at the right chemistry—and the right understanding of what being in a band is for—to sustain themselves with private creative labor or let themselves go at an all-night blowout. Mark E. Smith would be proud. 

 @kevinwarwick

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Thu, April 11 - Eric Gales

Fri, April 12 - Chris Smither

Sat, April 13 - The Flat Five

IN ROTATION



Chicago pianist Mabel Kwan KELLY WEIME

PHILIP MONTORO

Reader music editor

Early Bauhaus Last month at Rockefeller Chapel, Bauhaus founders Peter Murphy and David J played the band's 1980 debut LP, *In the Flat Field*, which is almost as great as 1982's *The Sky's Gone Out*. This could be creeping fogginess talking, but I miss when goth music was histrionic, grotesque, campy, and bonkers.

Barkmarket My favorite 90s power trio split in '97 after three albums (five if you count early nontrio lineups), and each one wrapped its insidious rock hooks in ugly noise, perverse arrangements, and prickly, often blackly funny lyrics—a layer of off-putting avant-garde fuckery that made it seem like they were daring you to love their songs. Guitarist and front man Dave Sardy, who produced most of the band's output, has since worked with System of a Down, Marilyn Manson, and Oasis, and his soon-to-be-expensive expertise made every Barkmarket record sound more beautifully, elaborately gnarly than the one before.

Mabel Kwan performing two of Georg Friedrich Haas's *Trois Hommages* In February at the Frequency Festival, Chicago pianist Mabel Kwan played Haas's early-80s homages to György Ligeti and Steve Reich. The pieces consist of simple, rapidly repeated figures, shifting slowly in pitch and shape, played in sync on two pianos tuned a quarter step apart. This dense, steady barrage of notes at microtonal intervals produces an expansive halo of overtones and psychoacoustic effects—I sometimes heard disembodied choral voices or even a third piano that seemed to be floating invisibly near the ceiling.

A Reader staffer shares three musical obsessions, then asks someone (who asks someone else) to take a turn.

KEITH HERZIK

Poster artist and guitarist in Wet Wallet

The Gerogerigegege My favorite letter is "G." Japanese band the Gerogerigegege released an EP in 1993 titled *Yellow Trash Bazooka* featuring a call and response between someone reciting from a list of words beginning with the seventh letter of the alpha-

bet (many of which are deviant in nature) and bursts of screaming noise introduced by a Joey Ramone-style "One-two-three-four!" "Gadget," "Go commando," "Gräfenberg spot," "Greek culture," and the giggling after "Go straight" make me crave more than the 13 minutes I found on YouTube.



The Gerogerigegege's 1993 EP *Yellow Trash Bazooka*

Alien Sex Fiend UK freaks Alien Sex Fiend always give me a great trip. A shirtless maniac screaming silliness while his rad wife makes crazy gothic-horror death rock with buzz-saw rockabilly guitars, drum machines, and sci-fi movie samples is the peak of modern music by my standards. In high school decades ago I was turned on, and now I am indeed living in a "Nightmare Zone"! Overall I can't pick a favorite cut, but my cassette of the 1988 album *Another Planet* has been the soundtrack for many long showers.

The end credits music of *The Jeffersons* This TV show's closing theme mellows me out, man. Singing along with the amazing Ja'Net DuBois at the show's beginning is uplifting, but for me the soothing humming and tender piano of the ending give me my personal mantra—when I hear "*The Jeffersons* was recorded on tape in front of a studio audience," I usual-

ly return close to my baseline coolness. *Hmm mmm mmm... Mmm hmmyeahh...*

GINA HERZIK

Bassist and singer in Wet Wallet

Pledge Drive The first time I saw this Chicago band, the guitarist pulled out a Flying V, and I thought, "Whoa! This is gonna be great!" Almost all their songs tell relatable stories—about having only one nice shirt to wear, or not having enough money for a \$5 Hamm's. Several allude to professional wrestling, and "Empire" reminds me of Weird Al's "Mr. Popeil," with words lifted from the Empire Carpet commercial: "Free Michael Jordan basketball!" "Halloween deals so good, they're scary!" They're so much fun!

Talent shows on sitcoms In the 70s, 80s, and 90s, no matter how much TV neighbors, kids, parents, and school faculty hated one another, they could always organize a talent show or concert where they'd all perform together. And there was always an emcee and a packed house! This seemed to happen often on *Good Times*, and someone was guaranteed to impersonate Wolfman Jack. I wonder how many kids of my generation thought throwing a talent show was part of adulthood.

Sammy Hagar Ever since I was old enough to pick the radio station, Sammy Hagar has been a presence. The first song where I remember my brother and me changing the words to make it funnier was "Your Love Is Driving Me Crazy"—we probably did something like "Your Gloves Are Making Me Lazy." I started following Sammy on Instagram after seeing him in the crowd on a PBS awards show, singing along to a Neil Diamond performance. His feed is mostly sweet pics of two or three generations of his family on vacation, doing shots.



Chicago band Pledge Drive ASHLEIGH DYE

PICK OF THE WEEK

Saint Louis-born rapper Smino continues his smooth rise to stardom with *Noir*



© JACK MCKAIN

SMINO, PHOELIX

Sat 3/23, 7 PM, and Sun 3/24, 6 PM, House of Blues, 329 N. Dearborn, \$27-\$50.

WHEN CHICAGO-BASED rapper Smino was on tour for his breakout 2017 album, *Blkswn*, a billboard in his native Saint Louis advertised his homecoming show headlining Delmar Hall (capacity 750). And with his ultrasmooth voice and even smoother personality, Smino's been rising further upward without even seeming to try, achieving a slow and steady growth that's increasingly rare in the age of the viral hit. Since the November release of his second album, *Noir* (via his collective's label, Zero Fatigue, and licensed to Interscope-distributed Downtown Records), he's cracked the bottom of the *Billboard* 200, and for his current tour he's blocked off two nights in Chicago to headline the House of Blues (capacity 1,800). He's largely kept the album within his Zero Fatigue family, collaborating on the bulk of it with producer Monte Booker, and it's clear from Smino's recent interview with *Rolling Stone* that the two have a strong bond. "I felt like he was limitless," Smino said. "I don't like limitations. He can make anything. It's damn near sickening, bro. He's too good at making beats. I never seen nobody make beats like that." Smino gets a lot of mileage out of working with those he holds close: on the coolheaded, Booker-produced "Z4L," which also features Zero Fatigue rappers Bari and Jay2, he sounds positively angelic while delivering lurid lines. —LEOR GALIL



Cryptopsy
© ERIC SANCHEZ

THURSDAY21

LUCIFER *Spell, Black Road, and Ancient Seance open. 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 2105 S. State, \$17. 17+*

German singer Johanna Sadonis loves 70s heavy metal down to the last sweaty, swaggering riff. Her band Lucifer have shifted a bit stylistically since they emerged in 2014—the inevitable result of frequent lineup changes. The current incarnation is anchored by multi-instrumentalist Nicke Andersson (the Hellacopters, Entombed), who has become Sadonis's co-songwriter and also plays drums, bass, and half the guitar parts on the group's new album, *Lucifer II*. As a result, while the band's 2014 debut, *Lucifer I*, tended toward the doomy Sabbath side of the 70s, *Lucifer II* is more obsessed with hard rock in the vein of Deep Purple. "California Sun" grabs onto its retro hook with two biker gloves and wrings every ounce of its metal blooze out onto the grease-stained floor (and yes, the video features motorcycles). On the the Stones' "Dancing With Mr. D," Lucifer flattens the rhythm and adds thick guitars that turn Jagger's sensual threat into a pleasingly lumbering juggernaut. No matter what she sings, Sadonis's stentorian voice is instantly recognizable, a cross between Grace Slick and Robert Plant. When she wails "You gotta stand up to your fire!" in "Phoenix," you can almost feel the wind of a thousand lighters being raised. Though none of Lucifer's moves are exactly novel, for those who love the tradition, that's a feature, not a bug. —NOAH BERLATSKY

CRYPTOPSY *Aborted headlines; Cryptopsy, Benighted, Hideous Divinity, and Asphyxiator open. 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 2105 S. State, \$22. 17+*

Aging is wild. You wake up one day and realize that Matt McGachy, who joined Cryptopsy in 2007, has had the longest tenure of any of the four vocalists who've fronted the beloved Canadian technical death metal band, and also that your knees don't work very well anymore. I vividly remember metal-forum wars over which was better: the guttural incoherence of original singer Lord Worm or the hardcore theatrics of his replacement, Mike DiSalvo. Bitter battle lines were drawn, and many a poseur

fell in the message-board trenches. That was 20 years ago, and today's Cryptopsy is a much different beast than the one that recorded the 1996 classic *None So Vile*—drummer Flo Mounier is the only member from those days who's still with the band. In the years since, they've expanded their musical palette from the crushing but monochromatic bludgeon they became known for in the 90s. On 2008's *The Unspoken King*, McGachy shows he can switch between banshee shrieks, rasping pig grunts, and even clean vocals (albeit briefly) on a dime. The band's incorporation of new elements on the album, such as keyboards and deathcore-style breakdowns, made it much maligned by fans, but not all the criticism was warranted: Cryptopsy pull off these twists with varying degrees of success. On their past couple of releases, they strip back to their roots to craft a multifaceted, captivating approach to blastbeat-centric death metal. Their recent EPs, *The Book of Suffering: Tomes I + II*, prove Cryptopsy equally adept at pummeling death metal and room-clearing breakdowns. They're a band (dare I say) at the top of their game. —ED BLAIR

FRIDAY22

LA LUZ *Campdogzz and Wild Powwers open. 8:30 PM, Sleeping Village, 3734 W. Belmont, sold out. 21+*

Had La Luz been around during the garage revival of the early 2000s, they would've done a great job saving us from all the monotone Strokes imitators. But regardless of which era they emerged in, they'd have been able to make it on their own terms as a rock 'n' roll band, not as trend hoppers. Formed in 2012 in Seattle and based in Los Angeles since 2015, La Luz capture a moodier, more introspective side of garage rock—and never drop the beat. Guitarist Shana Cleveland sings in a blasé way that complements the band's jungle of guitar twang and constant organ grind. While La Luz are clearly inspired by 60s rock instrumentalists such as Link Wray and Dick Dale (rest in peace), their music also contains traces of Roy Orbison (albeit a raunchier version). A sizable portion of their numbers are instrumental, but the vocals drive home the melancholy, and you can expect them to rip it up in person. —JAMES PORTER ➔

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MUSIC

continued from 31

BEN PIRANI *Ethers open. 9 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, \$12. 21+*

Former Chicago man-about-town Ben Pirani has played a lot of musical roles over the past couple decades, among them jamming with a bunch of psych bands, including Civilized Age; drumming in maniacal grindcore group My Lai; and playing guitar in blues-rock outfit Chicago Stone Lightning Band. But while Pirani has spent much of his life mastering all the realms of punk and rock, he truly hit his stride about ten years ago, when he started dabbling in funky electro-soul—he made an impression as the hype man for the DJ night he helped found, Windy City Soul Club. After taking on the persona of Benjamin—a groovy and cocky extension of himself—Pirani relocated to New York, where he linked up with another musical Ben (Ben Carey) to release 2015's *Arriving via Cherries* Records. Though its spacey pop-R&B is a ton of fun, the album proved to be merely a stepping stone toward Pirani's first full-length under his full name, fall's *How Do I Talk to My Brother* (Colemine)—a touching, powerful slab of authentic soul that sounds like it's straight out of 1962. With its airtight rhythms and lush orchestration, *How Do I Talk to My Brother* is proof that Pirani is the real deal, and shows that his punk roots still ring true. While the tunes are pretty and smooth, Pirani delivers them with grit and passion, creating the kind of rough-around-the-edges glory that could only come from a child of the Fireside Bowl. —**LUCA CIMARUSTI**

SATURDAY 23

SYLEENA JOHNSON *Part of the Chi-Town Blues Fest, which also features Sir Charles Jones, Shirley Brown, and more, 8 PM, Horseshoe Casino Hammond, 777 Casino Center, Hammond, Indiana, \$64-\$104. 21+*

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Bad Bunny © COURTESY THE ARTIST

Syleena Johnson became a force in mainstream R&B in the early 2000s, landing several chart hits and working alongside such figures as Busta Rhymes, Kanye West, and R. Kelly. But in many ways the singer, daughter of Chicago soul/R&B/blues legend Syl Johnson, has always sounded like a roots woman: her voice is supple and resonant, yet toughened with grainy texture, and it highlights her deep-soul inheritance. Her songs are distinguished by a courageous willingness to express vulnerability—emotional and otherwise—in a genre where postmodernist ironic detachment and blunt aggression often seem to dominate. In 2017, she dropped *Rebirth of Soul* (Shanachie), a set of classic soul and R&B covers on which she's supported by Syl's old-school production and arrangements (read: no synths). The album was far from an exercise in moldy-fig revivalism: she breathed new, urgent life into standards, including Etta James's "I'd Rather Go Blind," Betty Everett's "There'll Come a Time," and Aretha Franklin's "Chain of Fools." She also recast her father's anthemic 1969 hit "Is It Because I'm Black?" as an ominous, smoldering meditation, reminding us that the anger and frustration borne of racial injustice still seethes, and that the eruption of what James Baldwin called "the fire next time" may be closer than we think. —**DAVID WHITEIS**

LEIKELI47 7 PM, *Subterranean*, 2011 W. North, \$20. 17+

Rapper Leikeli47 grew up in the borough of Brooklyn and the state of Virginia and considers both her home turf, but her recent second album and major-label debut, *Acrylic* (RCA/Hardcover), evokes the sounds of black life throughout the U.S. She references historically black universities and colleges, samples ballroom-culture legend MC Debra, and borrows from heat-stricken gospel, raw dance-hall, placid neosoul, blustery NYC radio rap, menacing trap, and an upbeat bricolage of feel-good pop. Leikeli's limber voice and liquid flow help make sense of *Acrylic*'s voluminous run time and panoply of distinctive instrumentals. Each song highlights a

different aspect of her personality, and as a whole the album suggests there's much more to her than what she's shared so far—on "Hoyt and Schermerhorn" she shows off her romantic side, and on "Post That" she bursts out with boisterous pride. Leikeli never seems to appear in public without first covering her face—she's fond of balaclavas and of bandanas modified with holes for her eyes and mouth. It's easy to fixate on her disguises, but I can't blame her for wanting to take drastic measures to prevent others from defining her by her looks—that way she can focus on showing the world what it really means to be Leikeli. —**LEOR GALIL**

RYEN Myles Bryant and Dewey Depp open. 9 PM, *Subterranean*, 2011 W. North, \$12. 17+

Bad Bunny (see Sunday) not only helped Latin trap cross over in the U.S., he also established a new beachhead for Spanish-language hip-hop here—and the spike in visibility of these genres undoubtedly helps artists such as Chicago's Ryen get a little closer to their dreams of mainstream success. He started out as a member of local pop-rap trio the A.S.A. Project, and since going solo in 2017, he's been polishing a pristine pop style that borrows from EDM, synth indie-pop, frictionless rap, and any other glistening sound that aims to pluck the heartstrings of the masses. Ryen's music and ambition have won him at least one remarkable local supporter: rapper, educator, and former Molemen member Navarro (previously known as Scheme) began managing Ryen after the rapper made a guest appearance in Navarro's set during Red Bull Music Festival Chicago's daylong celebration of local Latinx artists. On his self-released debut EP, last year's *24* (Private Stock), Ryen raps and sings in Spanish and English, trying out different instrumental and vocal combinations as though to see what sticks; on "Tu Droga" he interpolates the melody and a line of lyrics from Frank Ocean's "Nights," delivers an Auto-Tune-drenched hook in Spanish, and grafts blustering horn samples and stuttering bass drops atop minimal hi-hat patterns. —**LEOR GALIL**

MUSIC



Kacey Musgraves
 COURTESY THE
 ARTIST

SMINO See *Pick of the Week*, page 31. *Phoelix* opens. 7 PM, House of Blues, 329 N. Dearborn, \$27-\$50.

SUNDAY24

BAD BUNNY 7 PM, Allstate Arena, 6920 N. Mannheim, Rosemont, \$69-\$109.

As the face of Latin trap, Bad Bunny needs no introduction. More important, he needs no definitions. The Puerto Rico native born Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio has become an international superstar with a major presence across the U.S., and he's done it all on his own terms, without pandering to America-centric or gender expectations. The 25-year-old croons almost entirely in Spanish, with lyrics that flow between crudely explicit and somberly poetic; he shows off his colorful manicures on social media and has openly criticized the norms of masculinity. And on his debut album, *X 100PRE* (a stylization of "por siempre," a Spanish way to say "forever"), Martínez Ocasio refuses to confine himself to any one genre or subject. The album transitions with dizzying deftness from sullen electro-pop to slow emo reggaeton ballads to danceable trap-chata (trap-bachata) with dembow beats. The rapper shouts out his roots too, with lyrical references to and samples of Puerto Rican musicians such as Daddy Yankee, Plan B, and La Banda Algate. He nods to a hedonistic lifestyle, mentioning making love on a jet ski on the Diplo-supported "200 MPH" and bragging about Maseratis and Moët on the synth-driven "Otra Noche en Miami." But there's also plenty of depth throughout the album. On "Caro," a track that seems destined to be a club hit, he radiates confidence ("I'm expensive,"

he sings, "What the fuck does it matter to you?"), and its music video, which celebrates plus-size and trans models and models with disabilities, suggests that everyone should enjoy a similar level of self-acceptance. The choice to close with "Estamos Bien," Martínez Ocasio's testament to Puerto Rican tenacity after Hurricane Maria, and "MIA," his smash hit with Drake, seems fitting for an album that shows us not only where Bad Bunny's from and where he's going but also that he's going to leave a colorful mark along the way. —**RACHEL YANG**

SMINO See *Pick of the Week*, page 31. *Phoelix* opens. 6 PM, House of Blues, 329 N. Dearborn, \$27-\$50.

MONDAY25

KACEY MUSGRAVES 8 PM, Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State, \$175.

A lot has happened for country queen Kacey Musgraves since she last played Chicago, in the opening slot on Harry Styles's 2018 tour. She presented at the Oscars, guest-judged an episode of *RuPaul's Drag Race*, and—oh yeah—won the Album of the Year Grammy for her third record, 2018's *Golden Hour*. As pop music's current golden girl, Musgraves is back on the road headlining the "Oh, What a World" tour. And as her star power rises, she seems poised between a before and an after, like that instant between lightning flash and thunder-clap. Following a career-defining year, she's ready to show off her chops. On the whimsical track her tour is named for, she sings, "There's all kinds of magic, it's hard to believe"—and she channels that ➔

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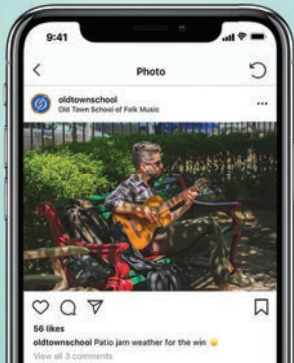
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Schlippenbach Trio

by CAROLINE FORBES



continued from 33

whimsy and dreaminess in her live shows, with aesthetic choices such as rainbow-filtered pastel stage lights and 70s-inspired designer jumpsuits and fur coats. Throughout her ascent, Musgraves has kept the reins on her identity. *Golden Hour* retains her twang while exploring new musical territory, including the disco-tinged “High Horse” and the kitschy throwback “Velvet Elvis.” And her effortless cool bridges rest stops and runways: In a recent video produced by Vogue for New York Fashion Week, she dances in a wood-paneled motel room while wearing a Rodarte gown. At the end of the video, an old-timey title card flashes across the screen: “That’s Country.” —**MEGAN KIRBY**

yielded some of the greatest free jazz to come from across the Atlantic. Parker and Lytton have been playing together for even longer, achieving music of extraordinary complexity in both acoustic and electroacoustic settings. This configuration has visited Chicago twice before, in 1998 and 2003; the double CD *America 2003* (Psi), which was recorded during two other gigs on the latter tour, flows inexorably from one possibility to the next, including jagged juxtapositions of density and space and a bit of serialist boogie-woogie. —**BILL MEYER**

VOIVOD *Yob headlines; Voivod and Amenra open. 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 1807 S. Allport, \$30-\$45. 17+*

WEDNESDAY²⁷

SCHLIPPENBACH TRIO Jason Stein and Joshua Abrams open. Also Thu 3/28, same time and venue, with opener John Dikeman. 8:30 PM, Constellation, 3111 N. Western, \$25-\$30. 18+

Pianist Alexander von Schlippenbach, saxophonist Evan Parker, and percussionist Paul Lytton are all members of the first generation of musicians from England and Europe to respond to the example of American free jazz with proposals of their own. Each man has attained singular mastery of his instrument, and between them they’ve stripped the jazz vernacular out of their musical language, added junkyard sounds, and mapped out the connections between jazz and 12-tone classical composition (to name just three of the creative strategies they’ve pursued). And they’ve done much of their best work in one another’s company. An identically named Schlippenbach Trio that includes the pianist, Parker, and German drummer Paul Lovens has carried on a semiannual touring and recording partnership since 1972, sustaining a dialogue between ultraconcentrated, collectively conceived statements and extended performances fueled by an unflagging anticipation of one another’s ideas—it’s

Roaring out of the gate in the early 80s as a tight, inventive thrash unit, Quebecois legends Voivod quickly became as sticky as a ball of Velcro, picking up influences from prog, industrial, modern classical, and technical death metal. They’ve forged a singular path of sci-fi tech metal that’s become highly influential in heavy music and beyond, but they’ve also endured their share of bad luck and tragedy—a late-90s car crash badly injured bassist and vocalist Eric “E-Force” Forrest, and in 2005 original guitarist Denis “Piggy” D’Amour passed away from cancer. Through all the ups and downs, they’ve kept on space truckin’; last year they released their 14th full-length, *The Wake* (Century Media). On the album, bassist Dominic “Rocky” La Roche joins two original members, vocalist Denis “Snake” Bélanger and drummer Michel “Away” Langevin, and relatively new guitarist Daniel “Chewy” Mongrain. Widely heralded as one of the best metal releases of 2018, *The Wake* is a loose concept album involving postapocalyptic politics, and it’s a big head trip. Voivod spin their tale through a glorious array of chugging, rumbling styles, and the album culminates in the glorious 12-minute “Sonic Mycelium”—which reprises themes from previous tracks only to resolve them in fatalistic ecstasy, complete with strings. —**MONICA KENDRICK**



GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

EVER SINCE Chicago riff machines **Bible of the Devil** first cranked up the jams 20 years ago, *Reader* critics have had a devil of a time deciding whether their music is metal or hard rock. Gossip Wolf is ready to settle the debate—it just doesn't matter! Last week the band self-released their seventh full-length, ***Feel It***, and BotD's snapping dual-guitar attack and strutting rhythms are in fine fettle on blasters such as "(Love at) The Speed of Night" and "The Downtown Boogie." The band are still planning a record-release show (and other 20th-anniversary events), but for now they'll celebrate *Feel It* with a DJ set at **Exit** on Sunday, March 24, where they'll raffle off BotD swag and tickets for concerts by Yob, Judas Priest, and Uncle Acid & the Deadbeats. Bring a cake!

A couple weeks ago, Gossip Wolf caught a fiery live set by confessional local rapper **Boys vs. Girls**—and you should do the same ASAP. On Saturday, March 23, Boys vs. Girls hosts a celebration of LGBTQ+ musicians called **"The Pride Takeover"** at **Gallery Cabaret**. A dozen acts will perform, give or take a couple, and this wolf is eager to see singer-songwriter **Natalie Grace Alford** and rappers **Fury** and **MC Foucault**.

Brunch isn't just for yuppies anymore—fans of ambient, drone, and experimental music like late-morning eggs and Bloody Marys too! Chicagoans in the latter category will be glad to know that musician **Michael Hilger** (of Thin Hymns) and chef **Mickey Neely** (from Bungalow and the Moonlighter) throw a monthly brunch concert series at **Sleeping Village** called **Deep Breakfast**. On Sunday, March 24, **Von Drum** (aka Danny Van Duerem) and **Cooper Crain** (Bitchin Bajas, Cave) perform at Deep Breakfast, with food by Neely and baker **Jess Galli**, who works with him at **Bungalow** (the new brewpub from Middle Brow Beer). The meal and one drink cost \$20, and the music is free; the fun starts at 11 AM.

—J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL

Got a tip? Tweet @Gossip.Wolf or e-mail gossipwolf@chicagoreader.com.

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Acid Dad 5/14, 9 PM, Empty Bottle, on sale Wed 3/20, noon
Adam Ant 9/7, 8 PM, Riviera Theatre, on sale Fri 3/22, 10 AM, 18+
Beast Coast, Joey Bada\$\$ 8/14, 7 PM, Huntington Bank Pavilion
Bill MacKay 3/29, 9 PM, Hideout
Bilmuri, No Dice 4/25, 7 PM, Bottom Lounge
Black Keys, Modest Mouse 9/27, 7 PM, United Center, on sale Fri 3/22, 10 AM
Bright Light Social Hour 5/11, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Teri Bristol, Psycho-Bitch 5/24, 10 PM, Smart Bar
Broncho 5/9, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Cash Box Kings 5/11, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 3/22, 10 AM
Roseanne Cash, Ry Cooder 6/18, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre, on sale Fri 3/22, 10 AM
Paul Cebal Tomorrow Sound 6/1, 8:30 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
A.Chal, Tatiana Hazel 4/20, 10 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+
Chicago Honky Tonk 3/30, 4 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
Chicago Modular Synth Meet 4/6, noon, Empty Bottle
Cosmic Country Showcase with Cassandra Jenkins and more 4/12, 9 PM, Hideout
Damned Things, Crobot 5/17, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Elder Island 9/28, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 3/22, 10 AM, 18+
Ethers, Dark Tea 4/6, 9 PM, Hideout
Family of the Year 5/4, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+

Fauvely, Uma Bloo 5/20, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Flat Five 6/2, 7 PM, Hideout, on sale Fri 3/22, 10 AM
Funkadesi 6/7, 9 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 3/22, 10 AM
Kevin Griffin 5/9, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 3/22, 10 AM
Ben Harper & Innocent Criminals 8/17, 7 PM, Huntington Bank Pavilion
Hitter, Mock Identity, Lilac 4/7, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
L7 5/21, 7:30 PM, Metro, on sale Fri 3/22, 10 AM, 18+
Dylan LeBlanc 6/23, 7 PM, Schubas
Lost Frequencies 10/12, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, on sale Fri 3/22, 6 AM, 18+
LowDown Brass Band 4/20, 9 PM, Hideout
Maypole Folk Festival 4/27, 2 PM, Empty Bottle
Meat Puppets 6/1, 9 PM, Subterranean
Luis Miguel 6/9, 8:30 PM, Allstate Arena, Rosemont
Mini Mansions 6/7, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Mirrored featuring Skyler Rowe and more 3/30, 6 PM, Empty Bottle
Moon King 6/28, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Mungion 6/14, 11 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Nefesh Mountain 5/29, 7:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 3/22, 10 AM
Nelly, TLC 8/18, 7 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park
NRBQ 6/21-22, 8 PM, Hideout
On Big Shoulders 6/15, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 3/22, 10 AM
101WKQX Piquiq 6/15, 1 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park

ONO, Buck Gooter 5/25, 9:30 PM, Hideout
Operators 5/28, 8:30 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 3/22, 10 AM, 18+
Lawrence Peters Outfit 4/27, 9 PM, Hideout
Pineapple Thief 12/1, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Pink Avalanche, Anatomy of Habit, Djunah 4/18, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Pitchfork Music Festival with Haim, Mavis Staples, and more 7/19, noon, Union Park
Pitchfork Music Festival with Isley Brothers, Belle & Sebastian, and more 7/20, noon, Union Park
Pitchfork Music Festival with Robyn, Charli XCX, and more 7/21, noon, Union Park
Puddles Pity Party 6/7, 7:30 PM, Empty Bottle
The Vic, on sale Fri 3/22, 10 AM
Reggie's Roundup with Lockbox and more 3/28, 9 PM, Hideout
Remo Drive 5/31, 7:30 PM, Bottom Lounge
Diana Ross 7/10, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre, on sale Fri 3/22, 9 AM
Sad Summer Festival with Maine, Mayday Parade, and more 7/24, 1:30 PM, Aragon Ballroom, on sale Fri 3/22, 10 AM, 17+
St. Lucia, Airpark 5/13, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Kevin Sanderson 4/6, 10 PM, Smart Bar
Shinedown 7/14, 6:30 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park
Luke Slater, Jeff Derringer 4/19, 10 PM, Smart Bar
Something is Waiting, Low Dose, Thieves 4/8, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Sublime, Rome 7/5, 7 PM, Hun-

tington Bank Pavilion
Sunburned Hand of the Man, Dire Wolves, Plastic Crime-wave Syndicate 4/11, 9 PM, Hideout
Third Eye Blind, Jimmy Eat World 6/27, 7 PM, Huntington Bank Pavilion
Typical Sisters 4/7, 9:30 PM, Hideout
Vanishing Kids, Anatomy of Habit, Dead Feathers 3/31, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Vincent 8/10, 9 PM, Schubas, 18+
Waldos Forever Fest with Big Freedia, Tatiana Hazel 4/20, 9 AM, Dispensary 33, 18+
We Were Promised Jetpacks 7/13, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Wear Your Wounds, Uniform 5/9, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Wet Wallet, SPVD, Wood Chickens, Roboman 4/3, 9 PM, Reed's Local
WHPK Benefit with Blacker Face, Violet 3/29, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Windy City Soul Club 3/30, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Luke Winslow-King 5/18, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn

UPDATED

Hand Habits 4/4, 9 PM; 4/5, 10 PM, Hideout, 4/4 sold out; 4/5 added
Massive Attack 9/11, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre, Rescheduled; tickets purchased for 3/23 will be honored for 9/11

UPCOMING

Accidentals 6/20, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston
Acid Mothers Temple, Yaman-taka // Sonic Titan 4/13, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Cisco Adler 4/30, 7 PM, Schubas
Antlers 4/5, 9 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Architects, Thy Art Is Murder 5/25, 6:30 PM, Concord Music Hall
David Archuleta 4/2, 8 PM, City Winery
Juan Atkins 5/1, 9 PM, Thalia Hall, 18+
Atliens 4/6, 8:30 PM, Bottom Lounge, 18+
Marc Broussard 4/16-17, 8 PM, City Winery
Deerhoof, Palm 4/21, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
J Fernandez, Coughy, Izzy True 4/15, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Lee Fields & the Expressions 4/12, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Film School, Mint Field 5/5, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Flat Five 4/13, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
Kirk Fletcher 5/13, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston
Flipper 6/28, 8 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+
Florence & the Machine, Blood Orange 5/23, 7:30 PM, Huntington Bank Pavilion
Mary Flower 4/28, 3 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music
Gangstagrass 5/12, 7:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston
Kevin Garrett 5/12, 7:30 PM, Lincoln Hall
Lion's Law 6/2, 6 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 18+
Lissie 5/10, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston
Lithics 6/22, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
National Parks 4/13, 6 and 9 PM, Schubas, 18+
Old 97's 3/28, 7 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Open Mike Eagle, Sammus, Video Dave 4/1, 8 PM, Schubas, 18+
Ben Platt, Wrabel, Ben Abraham 5/3, 7:30 PM, Chicago Theatre
Plini, Mestis 4/7, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Portland Cello Project 4/12, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston
Omara Portuondo 5/1, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music
San Holo, Taska Black 4/27, 8 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 18+
Antonio Sanchez & Migration 3/31, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston
Sik-K 4/16, 7:15 PM, Concord Music Hall
Skating Polly, Jo Passed 5/2, 7 PM, Schubas
Skeletonwitch, Soft Kill 6/1, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Söndörgö 4/7, 4 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music
Damo Suzuki's Network 5/4-5, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+
Verve Pipe 3/29, 8 PM, City Winery
Xeno & Oaklander, Odonis Odonis 4/11, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Xiu Xiu 5/17, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Yheti 5/3, 10 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Yo La Tengo, Minus 5 6/23, 7 PM, Temperance Beer Company, Evanston, 18+
Zveri 5/31, 7 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+

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By Dan Savage

The myth of small Asian dicks

Advice on race-specific sexual preferences.

Q: I'm a straight white woman in my early 30s. In theory, I've always been into men of all races—but in practice, most of my exes are Latino and white. In September, I met this really handsome Chinese-American guy, and I feel like he rewired me. I've been exclusively attracted to Asian guys since. I'm not writing to ask if this is racist, because I'm not asking these guys to, like, speak Korean to me in bed or do any role-playing stuff. We just date and have sex, same as my past relationships. But if any of these dudes saw my Tinder matches, they'd be like, "This woman has a thing for Asian guys." Which I do, but it's pretty new. Is this normal? Do people just change preferences like that? Also, can you do a PSA about Asian dicks? In my recent but considerable experience, they run the gamut from average to gigantic. If small Asian dicks were a thing, I would have encountered at least one by now. That shit is a myth. — **ASIAN MALE/WHITE FEMALE**

A: Here's my general take on race-specific sexual preferences: So long as you can see and treat your sex partners as individuals and not just as objects—we are all also objects—and so long as you can express your preferences without coming across and/or being a racist shitbag, and so long as you've interrogated your preferences to make sure they're actually yours and not a mindless desire for what you've been told you're supposed to want (i.e., the currently prevailing beauty standard or its equally mindless rejection, the "transgressive" fetishization of the "other"), then it's okay to seek out sex and/

or romantic partners of a particular race.

I ran my general take on race-specific sexual preferences past Joel Kim Booster—a writer and comedian whose work often touches on race and desire—and he approved. (Whew.) I also shared your letter with him, AMWF, and Booster had some thoughts for you.

"It doesn't sound like her newfound preference for Asian men has anything to do with the uncomfortable fetishization of culture," said Booster. "It's good that she's not asking them to speak Korean or do any sort of Asian role-playing—something that's been asked of me before (and it's a bummer, trust). Her interest in Asian men seems to be mostly an aesthetic thing, which you certainly can't fault her for: There are a lot of hot Asian dudes out there."

Booster also had some questions for you.

"It's not uncommon for people later in life to discover that they're attracted to something they'd never considered sexy before—full-grown adults are out here discovering they're bi every damn day," said Booster. "But she went 30 years before she saw one Asian man she was attracted to? And now this guy has 'rewired' her to be attracted only to Asian men?"

He said that he would like to see a picture of this magical guy, AMWF, and I would, too.

"If she was chill about it and just started adding Asian men into the mix, this wouldn't seem like an issue," added Booster. "But from what I can gather, she has shifted to exclusively fucking Asian guys and feels the need to write a letter about it. That feels like a red flag, and yet I can't pinpoint why."

SAVAGE LOVE

Maybe you're just making up for lost time—maybe you're getting with all the Asian dick you can now to make up for all the Asian dick you missed out on before you ran into that one impossibly hot Asian guy—and your desires/preferences/Tinder profile will achieve a racially harmonious equilibrium at a certain point. But whether you remain exclusively attracted to Asian guys for the rest of your life or not, AMWF, make sure you don't treat Asian guys like you're doing them a favor by sitting on their gamut-running dicks.

"I'm weary of people with a specific racial preference for Asian men. And it's less out of a fear of being fetishized—though that's certainly part of it—and more because of the implicit power imbalance that exists in those relationships," said Booster. "It's all artificially constructed by The Culture, of course, but I'm acutely aware that society views Asian men as less masculine and therefore less desirable. And I've learned that guys who have a preference for Asian men sometimes bring a certain kind of 'entitlement' to our interactions, i.e., 'You should feel lucky I'm paying you this kind of attention.' And that's gross! It doesn't sound like she's doing that, but something about this letter makes me feel like she wants to be congratulated for being woke enough to consider Asian guys. She'd do well to keep this stuff behind the curtain—no one wants to feel like someone was into them only because of some witch's curse a hot Chinese American guy put on them at a bar."

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developing storylines to use for improvements, replicate best practices across regions, create KPIs & maintain attainment; building training programs for new tools for multiple customers levels (front-end recruiter to senior directors); effectively communicating change management for current, enhanced & future products (metrics reports & dashboards to increase effectiveness & adoption of tools) across global regions; writing scripts to create new tables, views, queries; enablement of software modules, building & launching data dashboards, ETL tools, Tableau, Business Objects/Tools. Send resume to: R. Harvey, REF: SKM, 555 W Adams, Chicago, IL 60661

Northwestern University, Dept. of Economics, Evanston, IL. Position: Assistant Professor. Duties: teach, advise students, conduct and publish economic research. Required: PhD in economics or related degree, outstanding research record, excellent recommendations, teaching ability. Send CV and 3 reference letters to Director of Finance and Adm., econ@northwestern.edu. AA/EOE.

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AK Information Technologies, Inc. in Rolling Meadows, IL is seeking Cloud Technical Developers to dvlp & implmnt custom web, cloud ERP apps & reports. No trvl; no telecomm. Postn is proj-based @ unanticipated sites w/in U.S. Relo may be req'd at proj end. Mail resumes to: AK Information Technologies, Inc., Attn: HR, 5105 Tollview Dr., Ste 195, Rolling Meadows, IL 60008.

REAL ESTATE RENTALS

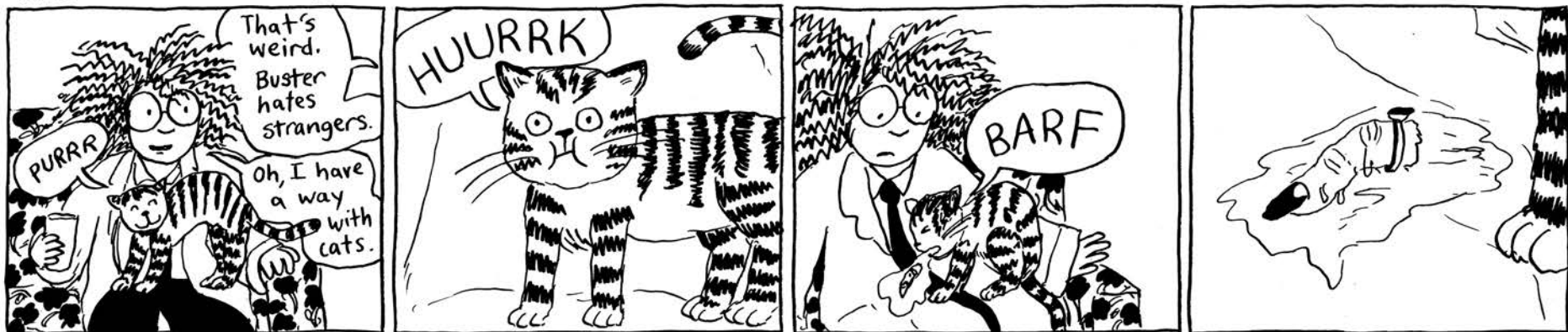
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Large studio near Warren Park. 1904 W. Pratt. Hardwood floors. Cats OK. \$795/month. Heat included. Available 2/1. (773)761 4318. www.lakefrontmgt.com

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\$1800/month. Unheated. Armitage Bus/Blue line
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11th Annual EL PUEBLO CANTA

Proceeds - IMMIGRANT JUSTICE WORK

Saturday April 6th
7:00 - 8:30pm
Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ
615 West Wellington

Tickets \$25 \$15 students/limited income under 12 FREE
waucc.org/2019ElPuebloCanta/
5:30 - 7:00pm Purchase Latino & Arabic Food

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to An Act in relation to the use of an Assumed Business Name in the conduct or transaction of Business in the State, as amended, that a certification was registered by the undersigned with the County Clerk of

Cook County. Registration Number: Y19000752 on March 8, 2019 Under the Assumed Business Name of RACHEL DAHLGREN THERAPY with the business located at: 2620 W HOMER ST APT 1, CHICAGO, IL 60647 The true and real full name(s) and residence address of the owner(s)/partner(s) is: RACHEL DAHLGREN 2620 W HOMER ST APT 1 CHICAGO, IL 60647, USA (4/4)

STATE OF ILLINOIS, PUBLICATION NOTICE OF COURT DATE FOR REQUEST FOR NAME CHANGE (ADULT For Court Use Only CIRCUIT COURT COUNTY) Location Cook County - County Division - District 1 - 50 W Washington Street Chicago Case Type: Name Change from Kaitlin Darbi DeBerardinis to Kaitlin Darbi Masters Case Initiation Date 3/12/2019 Court Date 5/17/2019 Case # 2019CONC000300 Assigned to Judge Calendar, 12 (4/4)

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3/2ures

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THE BRONX - SWINGIN' UTTERS
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DESADECA • SAM WHITE

FRI 3/22 5PM-FREE **HARD COUNTRY HONKY TONK WITH THE HOYLE BROTHERS**
BEN PIRANI
ETHERS • WCSC DJs

SAT 3/23 **WLUW PRESENTS JERRY PAPER**
HEALING POTPOURRI • CURT OREN

SAT 3/23 @ BOHEMIAN NAT'L CEMETERY (5255 N. PULASKI RD.) **BEYOND THE GATE FEAT. HUERCO S.**
JOSHUA ABRAMS & NATURAL INFORMATION SOCIETY

SUN 3/24 12PM-FREE **HANDMADE MARKET**
THE GOOCH PALMS
WÜLPAC • THE MISSED • BRIC-A-BRAC DJs

MON 3/25 FREE **DAN RICO**
VAMOS • RICH JONES

TUE 3/26 **JERUSALEM IN MY HEART**
ANGEL BAT DAVID • BEN SHEMEI [SUUNS]

THU 3/28 **VIAGRA BOYS**
POTTERY • GANSER

FRI 3/29 **WHPK BENEFIT FEAT. BLACKER FACE**
VIOLET • PETE WILLSON & THE ROOKS

3/30: **MIRRORED SERIES** (6PM - FREE), 3/30: **WINDY CITY SOUL CLUB**, 3/31: **BITCHIN POP-UP** (12PM), 3/31: **VANISHING KIDS**, 4/1: **NOT FOR YOU** (EP RELEASE - FREE), 4/3: **BEAT CIRCUS**, 4/4: **MDOU MOCTAR**, 4/5: **DAVID QUINN**, 4/6: **CHICAGO MODULAR SYNTH MEET** (12PM - FREE), 4/6: **KEMBA**, 4/7: **HITTER**, 4/8: **SOMETHING IS WAITING** (RECORD RELEASE - FREE), 4/9: **THE COATHANGERS**, 4/10: **BLUE DREAM**, 4/11: **XENO & OAKLANDER**, 4/12: **FAUX FEROCIOUS**, 4/12 @ CO-PRO: **SEN MORIMOTO**, 4/13: **ACID MOTHERS TEMPLE**, 4/14: **EMPTY BOTTLE BOOK CLUB** (3PM - FREE), 4/14: **ALDOUS HARDING**, 4/15: **J FERNANDEZ** (FREE), 4/19: **DILLY DALLY**
NEW ON SALE: 4/18: **PINK AVALANCHE** (RECORD RELEASE), 4/20 @ ARGYLE & CLARK: **WALDO FOREVER FEST** FEAT. BIG FREEDIA, 5/5: **FILM SCHOOL** • MINT FIELD, 5/9: **WEAR YOUR WOUNDS** • UNIFORM, 5/21: **MARY OCHER + YOUR GOVERNMENT**, 6/7: **MINI MANSIONS**

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3.21-22 THE SUBDUDES

3.23 IDAN RAICHEL - PIANO & SONGS

3.26 VAN HUNT

3.29 THE VERVE PIPE

4.2 DAVID ARCHULETA

4.3 LOUIS YORK & THE SHINDELLAS

4.4 TOMMY CASTRO & THE PAINKILLERS

4.5 CYRILLE AIMEE
A SONDHEIM ADVENTURE

4.6 WILLIE NILE

4.8-9 MIKI HOWARD

4.10 VICTORY BOYD
FEATURING INFINITY'S SONG

4.14 JOURNEYMAN - A TRIBUTE TO ERIC CLAPTON

4.15 GLENN JONES

4.16-17 MARC BROUSSARD

4.18 GRAHAM PARKER WITH ADAM EZRA

4.19 CARBON LEAF

4.20 BRAD WILLIAMS

4.21 DAVE DAVIES

4.22 MAGGIE SPEAKS PRESENTS YACHT ROCK NIGHT

4.23 A PURPLE TOUCH: LIV WARFIELD HONORS PRINCE

UPCOMING SHOWS

3.30-31 WILL DOWNING

4.1 KAITLYN BRISTOWE

4.6 WDCB JAZZ BRUNCH SHOW
FEAT. TAMMY MCCANN QUARTET

4.7 STORY JAM- 12PM

4.7 TUSK - FLEETWOOD MAC EXPERIENCE

4.11 DOWNTOWN SEDER DAVID BROZA, MICHAEL MCDERMOTT, CORKY SIEGEL, LYNNE JORDAN, RICH JONES, KEN KRIMSTEIN, T.J. SHANOFF, NAOMI SPUNGEN

4.12-13 MARTIN SEXTON WITH CHRIS TRAPPER

4.14 STORY SESSIONS

MAR 24

FREDDY JONES BAND
WITH BRETT WISCONS

MAR 25

EIGHTH BLACKBIRD
ICE N' SPICE

MAR 27

THE TIM O'BRIEN BAND
WITH DANNY BURNS

MAR 28

ROBERT GLASPER TRIO
FEAT. CHRIS DAVE & DERRICK HODGE

A vibrant, action-packed illustration featuring several Dragon Ball Super characters. At the top center is the large, golden, wrinkled face of Beerus. Below him, the title 'DRAGON BALL SUPER' is written in a stylized font, with 'CARD GAME' in large, bold letters and 'CELEBRATIONS' in a golden, outlined font. The background is filled with bright, colorful energy blasts and lightning. In the foreground, Vegeta (with blue hair) and Broly (with green hair) are shown in a dynamic pose, with Vegeta's hand reaching out towards Broly. Other characters like Frieza and Goku are visible in the background.

DRAGON BALL SUPER CARD GAME CELEBRATIONS

***Bring a friend and join other players in learning
to play the Dragon Ball Super card game!***

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3/23/2019 - 3/24/2019

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